PAVING THE WAY FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

ANA G. MENDEZ UNIVERSITY-SYSTEM
ANNUAL REPORT 2007-08
PAVING THE WAY FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Throughout Ana G. Méndez University System’s (AGMUS) nearly 60 years of dedication and service to education in Puerto Rico, led by our founding mother’s visionary, tireless and exemplary life, the leading purpose of our endeavors has always been the improvement of our Island’s socioeconomic life. Tied to the constant pursuit of excellence, AGMUS has focused on a creative vision that puts education into action by addressing all aspects of our students’ development so they can contribute to society’s well-being as knowledgeable and responsible citizens.

At AGMUS we believe academia has the unique capacity and responsibility to provide relevant and enlightened alternatives from multiple perspectives to the benefit and integral development of our human potential and well-being of the planet as a whole.

Focusing on research and innovation as empowering agents that stimulate creativity and excellence in education and socioeconomic development, AGMUS is determined to expand the areas of science, technology, engineering and healthcare to promote a transformative and sustained model of participatory education and engagement to respond to the needs of a varied population locally, nationally and internationally.

Strategies like multisector regional collaborative alliances, community wellness and educational centers, business incubators, using the latest technology, internships, exchanges, and fostering scientific and research activities from intermediate and high through graduate schools, are among the initiatives that distinguish our institution’s philosophy to produce new and lifelong opportunities for social, cultural, physical and economic development that benefit students, country and the world’s society as a whole.

New challenges will always exist and, at AGMUS, we strive to facilitate the development of research and innovative activities that engender creativity, collaboration and a constant transformation of knowledge so we all can claim ownership of our own social and economic development in relevant, constructive and creative ways.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following fundamental principles, on which the Ana G. Méndez University System (AGMUS) was founded nearly 60 years ago, serve as the backbone for a new vision that is being formulated to successfully take AGMUS forward to the year 2015 and beyond.

• In a democratic society, every human being has the right to an education, regardless of race, sex, color, national origin, social status, physical or mental condition, religious, political or social belief.

• The development of human potential requires an open-door policy that allows students to benefit from academic programs to the full extent of their ability.

• All educational institutions should aspire to achieve academic excellence and should commit themselves to fostering such excellence through enlightened approaches to education.

• Academic institutions are integral components of the communities they serve.

• Faculty members must innovate for the benefit of their students and for their own professional growth.

• The real needs of Puerto Rico must be understood so that its human resources can be enriched and graduates can make a positive contribution to the progress of society in the work force.

• The educational development of the students should emphasize academic skill and growth that is productive in both daily living and employment.

• The fundamental commitment of the Ana G. Méndez University System promotes a better quality of life for our students, employees and the community at large.
VISION 2015 FOCUS ON GROWTH AND EXCELLENCE

As part of the University System’s goal to become one of the principal initiators of ideas on the island, Vision 2015 focuses on the strategies that will help generate feasible solutions to meet Puerto Rico’s economic and social development needs over the next decade.

Vision 2015 not only embraces the strategies implemented over the past decade in Vision 2005, it takes them to greater heights by emphasizing on new and expanded vectors or strategic priorities. These vectors are focused on seven key areas that include academics affairs, student services and development, public engagement, management and organizational development, physical and technological infrastructure, fiscal strength, and institutional quality and effectiveness.

With Vision 2015, Ana G. Méndez University System’s goal is to be recognized not only as an institution of higher learning, but one of excellence in the areas of research and services, contributing significantly to Puerto Rico’s economic growth and to the overall community. In the next years, the University System seeks to be recognized as an entity of transformation, constant innovation, and financial stability, centered on individuals as their main and principal focus, while making effective use of its technological, physical, and management resources to support its mission.
With ventures designed to address needs and circumstances of particular communities, like AGMUS’s university campuses in Metro Orlando and South Florida, individual advancement and socioeconomic development has been achieved within geographic areas thus served. Such success has encouraged the system to replicate the programs and hence serve other countries such as Panama and the Dominican Republic and other communities in the United States.

Leadership of the board has promoted being forerunners. Hence reactive approaches yield to forward-looking emerging issues. This has been the moving force in the development of the Virtual University (VU), a state-of-the-art option for distance learning. Through the VU, quality educational services will be available anywhere in the world, disseminating the knowledge needed to achieve a better quality of life, even in the most remote regions of the planet. The VU will also allow the enjoyment of unique professional- and personal-growth opportunities for AGMUS’s faculty, administration and associates, thereby, benefiting everyone associated with the program.

AGMUS’s financial strength has been a major objective for the board which, because of the current financial turmoil, has required steadfast resolution. Evaluating multiple options to achieve results and contain costs while assuring first-class services in state-of-the-art facilities has been grueling and exhausting. Stepping up to the times, this year the board held the annual meeting in Puerto Rico and saved a substantial amount of funds that had been budgeted for travel abroad. This certainly reflects the board’s commitment and accountability. Only a financially sound system will guarantee the opportunities expected by students and associates alike. These goals have been and will be the board and system’s goals.

A very positive and carefully structured Capital Campaign, with the relentless commitment of volunteers and associates, exceeded $20 million in donations and commitments, a record for an incipient philanthropic culture in Puerto Rico. Donations, commitments and creative-financing alternatives allowed for efficient construction scheduling and funding in stages. This, in turn, permitted convenient timing and the avoidance of cost spikes for construction materials, financing and other areas, which resulted in total development-cost savings of more than 30%. Therefore, in spite of the global recession, new construction projects broke ground and were inaugurated to serve students, faculty, researchers and the community.

AGMUS Board of Directors will continue to address financial issues as critical in achieving excellence and innovation while fostering international development and social responsibility. In this process, we will support the system’s president, chancellors, administrators, faculty and associates. A constructive, participative and dedicated spirit will demonstrate unity of purpose to achieve the AGMUS’s goals while building a better world for our children and future generations.

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ZORaida FONALLEDAS

JUAN M. GARCÍA PASSALACQ
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Academic year 2007-08 reflects major accomplishments in the advancement of Ana G. Méndez University System’s vision and commitment to excellence, innovation and social responsibility in contributing to Puerto Rico’s development. As set forth within this Annual Report, the number of outstanding initiatives, programs and strategies established reflect a vigorous university system engaged in multiple dimensions of our country’s well-being, agile and responsive to change, with local pertinence and international projection.

Sustained increases in enrollment and retention rates at all levels throughout our three universities, 13 off Campuses Centers and 2 Centers in Florida, reaffirm AGMUS’s position as one of the largest and fastest-growing academic institutions in Puerto Rico. Our share in the private higher-education market increased more than 6% from 2000 to 2008, the highest among all private institutions in Puerto Rico.

Recognized for its constant pursuit of excellence in learning and services, AGMUS regularly updates its academic offerings across the system to address local and international labor-market needs. Student and faculty internships and exchange programs to enhance academic development and exposure reached nearly 2,400 students, who have participated in national and international universities and organizations in the United States, South America, Europe, Japan, Singapore and Australia since 2002. During the same period, our Career & Placement Centers have assisted more than 17,000 students and neighboring community residents.

A renewed academic vision aims to convert AGMUS into a recognized leader in undergraduate and graduate research and innovation. Initiatives to advance this vision feature the creation of our new Student Research Development Center, as well as continued international collaboration and alliances with renowned universities, associations, scientists and research experts across the world. Broadened academic offerings at all levels, particularly graduate degrees, including new Ph.D.s are resulting in an increased number of research and development projects and the enhancement of an innovation culture at all levels.

Centered on the use of the latest technology and nontraditional learning experiences to respond to varied local, national and international populations, this year witnessed intensive work to move AGMUS’s strategic

“A renewed academic vision aims to transform AGMUS into a recognized leader in undergraduate and graduate research and innovation.”

SUAGM • 2008 ANNUAL REPORT
Dr. José F. Méndez, AGMUS President, received the 2008 Chamber of Commerce Zenit Award in recognition of the System’s educational achievements.

Virtual University project forward with comprehensive documentation submitted to Puerto Rico’s Council on Higher Education, the approval of the layout and design of its future facilities and the development of a virtual student-services model.

To support the continued expansion of AGMUS’ international markets, the Vice Presidency of U.S. and Latin American Affairs was established and is actively exploring new strategies to expand AGMUS’ presence in the U.S. Latino markets, including online dual-language academic offerings, new campuses and partnerships with other universities.

Capital investments of more than $10 million in new construction and plant improvements in 2007-08 support academic quality and institutional growth, with first-class physical facilities recognized for their design, maintenance and safety. The latest additions feature two new University Centers (in Yauco and Barceloneta), the second expansion of Universidad del Turabo’s School of Engineering, a new Integrated Communications Lab at Universidad Metropolitana, and Nueva Vision / Channel 40’s new digital tower in El Yunque National Rain Forest. Channel 40’s comprehensive digitalization conversion is nearly complete, in compliance with 2009 Federal Communications Commission requirements.

With thousands of students having passing through our doors and employing more than 2,000 faculty members and administrative associates, AGMUS has achieved a significant contribution to Puerto Rico’s economic and social development. This contribution, however, goes beyond the walls of our classrooms and campuses.

Our Public Policy Institute (IPP by its Spanish acronym) promotes discussion and collaboration among private, public and community sectors—tackling such challenging issues as municipal autonomy, health reform, solid-waste management, fiscal reform and other critical topics. The IPP initiatives included publishing studies on Puerto Rico’s nonprofit organizations and social needs, collaborative alliances to promote intelligent consumption and media campaigns encouraging youth to register and vote, as well as raising public awareness and support to prevent suicides.

Historic advances in economic-development initiatives, achieved this year through the four multisector regional alliances that AGMUS launched, included strategic projects in waste management, mass transportation, permits and establishment of Puerto Rico’s first comprehensive science park (the INTECOR Science Park in the municipality of Barceloneta) to foster research, human resources, development, entrepreneurship and other key goals planned for each particular region.

Throughout this past academic year, a number of awards and recognitions by prestigious organizations showcased the school, faculty and our service achievements, innovative economic-development initiatives, public-service efforts and campaigns, as well our talented students’ academic and athletic qualities.

The Ana G. Méndez University System is unique. The principles and goals that fostered the establishment of this institution of higher learning endure today as strongly as they did 59 years ago. Our success would not have been possible without the guidance, dedication and solidarity of our Board of Directors, the professionalism and loyalty of our outstanding human resources—from our committed secretaries to our executives, particularly our university Chancellors, who move our system on a path of quality and opportunity.

With our 60th anniversary around the corner, we look forward to continue to develop initiatives to transform Puerto Rico’s long-term socioeconomic welfare and development. Active leadership; local and international relevance and opportunities; innovation in education, research and development; technology; health sciences; and a collaborative culture to improve our internal and external communities’ quality of life will remain our pillars of action in the future.

Dr. José F. Méndez
President
Science and technology is a primary focus of the programs of AGMUS and the U.S. Presidential Advisory Board has played a pivotal role in important advances made by our universities in the sciences, engineering and health areas. The Board is made up of distinguished professionals in science and technology from United States government agencies and private institutions.

In charge of the System-wide individual, foundation, and corporate fundraising, the Associate Vice Presidency of Development and Alumni Affairs is on the final-stretch of AGMUS 3rd Capital Campaign “Let’s Build our Dreams: Envision – Support – Transform”, which culminates by the end of 2008. An unprecedented $24.6 million four-year effort, it is unique in scope to subsidize 8 extraordinary infrastructure projects and scholarship initiatives that help materialize our institutional vision of excellence, innovation, and growth and would not be possible without external support.

By July, 2008, we reached nearly $15 million donations in total and a record $8.9 million in solicited donations this year alone. Three campaigns surpassed their goals this year, namely:

- **Universidad del Turabo’s (UT) $2.6 million School of Engineering Expansion**, with construction actually beginning this year of the new facilities that almost double the existing building in size, thanks to the unwavering efforts and leadership of our Campaign’s chair eng. Jose Domingo Perez and co-chair, eng. Adriel Longo, and to the committed support from local engineers and other industry collaborators.

- **Nueva Vision/Channel 40’s conversion to digital television $3.3 million campaign** also exceeded its goal this year, thanks to generous external contributions and local legislative grants.

- **Similarly, our renowned Permanent Scholarship Fund surpassed its $2 million goal this year**, perpetuating AGMUS’s tradition of excellence by not only subsidizing underprivileged honor students’ education up to graduation, but also fostering their integral development with a scope of vital experiences that include cultural activities, emotional intelligence and etiquette training, community service requirements, and others. Most notably, AGMUS’s Permanent Scholarship Fund has been a key factor in increasing student retention and graduation rates.

Campaigns still in progress include Universidad del Este’s International School of Tourism & Hospitality Science and technology is a primary focus of the programs of AGMUS and the U.S. Presidential Advisory Board has played a pivotal role in important advances made by our universities in the sciences, engineering and health areas. The Board is made up of distinguished professionals in science and technology from United States government agencies and private institutions.
Additionally, this year our entire department’s bookkeeping as well as donor registry was completely automated and synchronized directly to AGMUS Financial Department through Banner Advancement. Feed to Finance, streamlining administrative processes.

As part of our public service function we lead the Puerto Rico Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals [AFP], which upholds the highest ethical standards of the profession. Also, our office was instrumental in the promotion and publication of the two 2007 investigative studies on Puerto Rico’s Social Needs, and Puerto Rico’s Non Profit Organizations, which update the social tendencies, needs and priorities, as well as catalog and update PR’s non-profit organizations’ data. Besides being valuable instruments for government, the third sector, community and other groups, the aim of these studies is to promote tax reform of the current PR donations Law 75, and increase the current 33% deduction allowance for non-profit donations, in order to encourage charitable donations in support of the third sector in Puerto Rico. Furthermore, we held informative workshops at community organizations about the content and methodology of the studies in order to empower them when planning and submitting proposals.

In our ongoing commitment to serve as a successful liaison between our graduates, AGMUS, and the community, this year Alumni Affairs incorporated enhanced features to our Alumni Association webpage and launched Banner Advancement and Alumni, customized to create a comprehensive AGMUS alumni database that will aid us in offering more relevant and functional services to our graduates. Additionally, distinguished alumni are honored at cocktail receptions, success stories are published in the Caribbean Business newspaper, and their photos are displayed in Gallery Halls at AGMUS’s three university campuses.

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- Alberto Maldonado Ruiz, Esq.
  Chancellor UMet
- Federico M. Matheu, Ph.D.
  Chancellor UMet
- Mygddlia Torres, Ph.D.
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- Margarita E. Méndez
  Associate VP, Development and Alumni
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  Assistant VP, Alumni and Annual Fund
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  Assistant Vice Chancellor of Institutional Development - UNE
- Martin Bignoni
  Assistant Vice Chancellor of Institutional Development - UT
- Betelisa Aquino
  Assistant Vice Chancellor of Institutional Development - UMET
- María Santiago
  Associate Director of Institutional Development - UNE

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BUILDING PUBLIC AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT

Recognized as a center for multidisciplinary research and study, the Ana G. Méndez University System’s Public Policy Institute [IPP by its Spanish acronym] has become an important resource for objective policy analysis to resolve critical issues and establish a viable agenda for Puerto Rico. The Institute educates and promotes discussion among academia, government agencies, community-interest groups and the public regarding significant public-policy issues that affect the Island’s progress and quality of life. Its vision is to foster citizens’ involvement in the discussion of public issues with the legislative and executive branches of government.

Our Public Policy Institute is extremely aware of its responsibility to society at large and is actively stimulating the search for positive solutions. Fundamental to the success of the IPP mission is its Advisory Board members; distinguished professionals representing widespread areas of the public, private, and community sectors and academia, all supporting the presentation of innovative solutions to reach consensus to address the social and public-policy issues on IPP’s annual agenda. This year, the board welcomed renowned Puerto Rican pathologist, Florabel G. Mullick, MD as Vice president of the board; attorney Rafael A. Nadal as board consultant; and José F. Méndez Jr., Jorge L. Crespo and Luis García Félix as ex-officio members.

The dissemination of the board’s findings is one of the primary goals of its mission and, to this effect we develop programs on a regular basis with AGMUS’s Channel 40/NueVisión television station, which broadcasts our weekly program “Hablando de Asuntos Públicos.” We revamped our official publication, Revista del IPP, in which we have in-depth discussions of the issues on our agenda. Additionally, the design of an updated official IPP webpage is in the work plan to begin during the 2008-2009 academic year.

This year, IPP’s agenda presented a wide range of important public issues as priorities to maintain continuity on next year’s work plan. Raising Municipal Autonomy Law to Constitutional Status promotes government reform and decentralization, and empowers municipalities to be more efficient and responsive to the different sectors within their boundaries. IPP sponsored the magisterial lecture and forum “Elevar a Rango Constitucional la Autonomía Municipal” (“Raising Municipal Autonomy to Constitutional Status”), delivered by former Puerto Rico governor Rafael Hernández Colón with the participation of mayors from Caguas, Guaynabo, Carolina, Comerio and others. In addition, AGMUS President, Dr. José F. Méndez presented recommendations and amendments to help clarify and guarantee municipal powers in Puerto Rico’s Constitution during public hearings held in 2007 by Puerto Rico’s Legislative Assembly, which were consonant with IPP’s deliberations.

To promote public discussion and awareness of Puerto Rico’s Land-Use Plan [PUT by its Spanish acronym, or Plan de Uso de Terrenos], the IPP-sponsored conferences, with the president of Puerto Rico’s Planning Board, in each of the Regional Economic Consortia initiated by AGMUS and joined efforts with their respective Steering Committees.

Similarly, AGMUS and IPP’s initiatives to promote eco-friendly solutions to solid-waste management on the Island included visits to high-tech processing plants on the U.S. and abroad with mayors, legislators and scholars. Our solid-waste management educational series, “Serie Educativa Sobre el Manejo de Desperdicios Sólidos,” developed in collaboration with Channel 40/NueVisión, received an Environmental Quality Award in 2008 from the New York chapter of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

As part of AGMUS’s Vision 2015 Public Engagement strategic vector, the creation of a plan for Puerto Rico’s economic development consonant with today’s competitive global economy was a key issue adopted by the IPP board. The board-designated Economic Development Committee, in charge of accomplishing this mission, arranged lectures with experts on the matter, including Committee Chairman Eng. Carlos Vivoni, Puerto Rican economist and board member Nicolás Muñoz; Ignacio J. Randle and Rodrigo Pérez Graciano, economic-development specialists in Argentina; and others who presented in-depth analyses, experiences and economic models during the board’s Second Annual Seminar held in Argentina this year.

Finally, with Universidad Metropolitana (Uimet), IPP sponsored the forum “Elevar a Rango Constitucional el Derecho a la Salud” (“Raising the Right to Health Care to Constitutional Status”), presented by the former Puerto Rico governor, Pedro Rosselló González, MD, who described constitutional-reform proposals to guarantee the right of all Puerto Rico residents to health preservation via equal access to health services, medical care and prevention programs.

Facing the challenges of a new era the IPP is committed to expanding the public dissemination of our findings and strengthening our local and international presence toward building the Island’s progress and an enriched quality of life for all.
A SUPERIOR RESOURCE FOR PUERTO RICO’S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Loyal to founder Ana G. Méndez’s tradition and dedication to Puerto Rico’s long-term social and economic progress, AGMUS has continually assumed a conscientious role of contributing in a dynamic and proactive way to the development and wellbeing of our Island.

In the face of a new globalized economy, the creation of a knowledge–based economy through the promotion of research and sciences, the dissemination of knowledge, and the commercialization of technology became a strategic imperative in the 1990’s for governments and academia worldwide in order to foster agility and competitiveness to keep up with the times.

Early in the new millennium AGMUS took a leading role in adapting this new economic development model to our setting by advocating for establishing regional, multi-sector alliances between local municipalities, private industry, and AGMUS, planting the seeds that resulted first in INTECO (Spanish acronym for the Eastern-Central Technological Initiative), and quickly followed by three other regional initiatives within 5 years. INTENOR (the Northern Technological Initiative), INTEC (North-Eastern Technological Initiative), and DISUR (Alliance for the Integrated Development of the South).

Now established independent non-profit organizations and encompassing 50 municipalities, these four successful regional consortia have strengthened, becoming major players in the economic development of Puerto Rico, each with a multi-sector board of directors and specific agendas and initiatives to continue developing their individual regions, with collaborative determination.

Among the initiatives in progress at the alliances, INTECO has been working with the development of the Urban Train that will link Caguas to metropolitan San Juan, one of the largest projects of the regions. This year, INTECO inaugurated a specialized in math, science and technology school geared to advance the educational offering of the region at the 7-12 level. The federal department of labor’s workforce development’s introduction plan WRWD was approved, and new business incubators have begun operations in Caguas and Humacao. INTECO was also chosen to participate in the federal WIA (Workforce Investment Act) pilot plan. Perhaps the most ambitious and important INTECO initiative is the creation and operation of a Regional Permit Processing Office that will accelerate and simplify the process of establishing new business and industrial operations.

The master plan for INTENDR’s Science Park, a unique innovation center at the heart of the pharmaceutical corridor in the north coast to integrate research and development facilities, enterprise development, and business incubators, has been approved. Barceloneta’s virtual business incubator began operating this year and physical facilities will be ready for early 2010. The construction planning process for the Urban Train which will operate on Puerto Rico’s northern side was initiated. A Regional Business Advisory Board was established following INTECO’s model. INTENDR was also chosen to participate in the WIA pilot plan.

INTENE’s classification as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization was granted this year, and regional business, academia and local government volunteer work teams were established focusing on six strategic priorities which include tourism; small and medium-sized businesses (PYMES, in Spanish creation and support; infrastructure and renewable energy; regionalizing permits processing; information technology; and an ambitious redevelopment plan of former U.S. Navy base of Roosevelt Roads of a collaborative inter-university campus, scientific park, and digital center, which has been approved by all constituents and is in the curriculum design process. INTENE is also working with a Waste to Energy program in Carolina, among other projects. DISUR is actively involved in the expansion development of the world-class Port of the Americas in Ponce.

In support of the project, which requires a complex support structure of specialized training, management, logistics, and more related to maritime transportation, DISUR established collaborative agreements with the universities of Antwerp and Rotterdam, with experience in large port management and training, and is in the design phase of an international transportation study, training, and research center: Train-the-trainers courses to prepare local resources for the venture are already being developed, and additionally, purchase of a training simulator for large cranes was approved for operation. DISUR is also working on Waste to Energy projects to be set up in Yauco and Guayama, and a regional economic development plan is in the works.

Many exciting things are now materializing. The regionalization model is now in place and government economic development and promotion efforts are starting to align with the new regional map. PRTEC, a preexisting government-supported consortium in Puerto Rico’s western region, is now integrating local participation by mayors and concurring with the other four consortia in a shared socio-economic development vision, increasing to 67 the number of municipalities participating in the movement. A pilot plan for the reorganization of WIA funds is also aligning itself with the economic development of the regions. Each consortia is working on projects that emphasize the natural resources, infrastructure and attractions particular to the region. The Puerto Rico Tourism Company is organizing its tourist destinations according to the regions, designating Porta Caribe to cover DISUR, combining INTENE and INTECO as a north-eastern destination, appointing Porta del Sol for the western region and developing the INTENDR region into yet another tourist destination region. Puerto Rico Manufacturer’s Association is also beginning to use the model to reinforce efforts and develop its own long term plans.

Next steps for the consortia include strengthening regional business-innovation culture through the creation of more business incubators and other specific tools. Analyses are also on the works to promote continual regional financial sustainability, and the promotion of the regions outside of Puerto Rico.
Multidimensional in its functions, the Office of the Executive Vice President orchestrates the synergy between AGMUS’s administrative and academic interaction with the rest of local and international communities and other institutions.

Internally, we facilitate presidential directives and promote the effective flow of communication and implementation among the system's academic institutions, the Vice Presidential divisions and Channel 40, as well as oversee the Telecommunications & IT Department and development of AGMUS’s University Centers.

In our external function, we oversee AGMUS’s Office of Corporate and International Affairs and serve as liaison to private, public and international sectors, including local, federal and foreign governments.

Technological innovation is a key vector area in our commitment to excellence and innovation. AGMUS invests millions of dollars annually in state-of-the-art technology and telecommunications systems to keep abreast of the rapidly evolving technological world. Among the host of projects carried out to enhance IT infrastructure and capacity this year, we installed a new microwave system between UMET and the main UNE and UT campuses to facilitate centralized information and wireless transmission between campuses. We expanded Internet access bandwidth 280% from 15 Mbts to 42 Mbts, updated the Central Storage System for improved information management, upgraded our Internet Security System (ISS) and engaged specialists to safeguard IT systems and existing assets as well as provide proactive security intelligence.

On the academic side, UNE’s Bayamón University Center introduced the Student Tracking System, a centralized information-management software that streamlines registration, student data and other curriculum programming processes. The system aids student retention by generating attendance and other reports, raising flags to identify and assist at-risk students.

Furthermore, to maximize the use of our high-technology resources and improve our academic and administrative personnel’s technological knowledge and dexterity, the Institutional Technology Committee was created to help boost the system’s technological transference.

Growth at AGMUS’s 13 University Centers (UCs), administered by the Associate Vice Presidency of University Centers, has steadily increased with a total enrollment of 12,852 in academic year 2007, a 123% increase from 2000’s 5,664 enrollment, with 10 out of the 13 centers increasing their total enrollment this year. New academic offerings included undergraduate health programs, graduate regular and AHORA (adult education) programs, as well as new Certificates in Technical Programs (CTPs).

This year, we inaugurated two conceptually innovative AGMUS UCs geared to advance regional socioeconomic development by addressing the needs of the young and adult student populations—along with relevant public community programs and services—in Puerto Rico’s northern, central and southern regions. With restructured academic offerings that cater to the growing labor-market needs of the region, particularly Health, Technological and Environmental Sciences, in state-of-the-art facilities, both UCs are scheduled to begin academic offerings in the fall 2008 semester:

UNE’s Barcelona Center includes a library, a free Community Technology Center, 13 modern classrooms, eight computer labs, five science labs—including nursing, anatomy, sonography and pharmacy labs—a bookstore and cafeteria; and introduced Health Sciences programs in Nursing, Pharmacy and Sonography.

Similarly, UT’s Naguabo Center will broaden its academic offerings and stay open for extended hours to include evening, Saturday and Continuing Education classes to serve Naguabo and neighboring communities, equipped with four modern labs and 10 interactive classrooms with the most up-to-date technology on the market.

To broaden AGMUS’s international scope and provide students and faculty with international exposure, our Corporate and International Affairs Office devised a number of initiatives to forge collaborative strategic agreements with international leaders and scholars; among these U.S. Ambassador to Chile Mariano Fernández visit to Universidad Metropolitana; Nicaragua’s Ambassador to the U.S. Arturo Cruz’s commencement speech at Universidad del Turabo’s graduation ceremony; joint sponsorship with New York’s John Jay College of Criminal Justice of the First International Conference on Justice and Policing in Diverse Societies, held in San Juan, Puerto Rico; and highlighting the four Regional Economic Development Multisectoral Alliances advocated by AGMUS at the Caribbean - Central American Action Annual Conference in Miami. In addition, AGMUS’s strategic internationalization plan was set forth with the publication “Achieving Excellence Through Internationalization,” released this year.

AGMUS’s International Advisory Board, created last year to advance its internationalization plan, initiated presentations in various international forums and held its second meeting on AGMUS’s South Florida Campus.
The Vice Presidency of Planning and Academic Affairs is a key player in achieving the goals and objectives identified in AGMUS’s strategic plans. Two major areas of responsibilities fall within the VP’s umbrella: Institutional Planning, which includes strategic planning, institutional research, statistics as well as coordination of the system’s physical and infrastructure development, and Academic Affairs, which focuses on fostering excellence in program offerings, faculty development and other academic support services.

Within the academic component, student retention has been a long-range system-wide priority. This year, all components of AGMUS—its three main institutions and 13 University Centers—achieved a significant increase in their first-year retention rate after the implementation of a new phase of the student-retention strategy. First implemented in 2006, this new approach focuses on reinforcing students’ academic performance and success, as opposed to solely emphasizing improvement of student services and social integration.

A system-wide Retention Commission has been in charge of implementing a unified model for student retention, resulting in a 1.3% increase in the first-year retention rate, from 66.3% in 2006 to 67.6% in 2007. Among the institutions, Universidad del Turabo reported the highest retention rate at 69.2% and Universidad Metropolitana the highest annual increase at 5.3% over the previous year. Meanwhile, UNE experienced the highest improvement at 5.6% since the Renacer retention model was implemented in 2006.

As part of AGMUS’s strategic vision to continue transforming its system into a leading undergraduate and graduate research institution, the Vice Presidency has been working hard to strengthen the framework for a Research Compliance culture. This has been achieved through the creation and strengthening of appropriate compliance committees, the issuance of policies, procedures and other issues related to the management and utilization of humans, animals and biohazardous materials for research projects. Initiatives included training and implementation of ethics programs to help researchers, faculty and students effectively anticipate and manage compliance; evaluation and approval of more than 200 research-project protocols; assigning a compliance coordinator to each of the three universities to help ensure integrity, confidentiality and compliance standards; as well as printed materials and a new web page providing forms, resources and information related to compliance regulations.

Also part of the system-wide strategy on science and research, the new Student Research Development Center (SRDC) is a key mechanism to advance leadership and excellence in research. Designed to replicate and disseminate the best practices of the successful joint National Science Foundation-UMeT Model Institutions for Excellence (ME) program throughout AGMUS, the SRDC aims to increase student involvement and motivation in research, science and technology fields while creating an effective student-support system and pathway from high school through undergraduate and graduate completion via scholarships, curriculum and faculty enrichment, international summer internships and other support strategies.

AGMUS’ School for Technical Studies, which provides one- to two-year certificates and associate degrees in high-demand fields for students not interested in traditional full-term degrees, established an innovative joint partnership with Puerto Rico’s Department of Education to offer technical programs in various municipal vocational schools. The first collaborative partnership already in operation was established in a new $14 million vocational school in the Municipality of Comerío, where UMET will offer 10 different certificate and associate-degree programs during evenings and weekends, starting in fall 2008. Similar projects are in the works by UT and UNE in Guayama and Coamo, respectively.
Institutional Planning and Research supports AGMUS’s administration on the road to excellence with analysis, statistics and delineation of its system’s strategic and physical plans. As part of the system’s commitment to keep ahead of technological development in the academic area, a study on the use of technology by AGMUS’s regular faculty was completed, following a study completed two years ago, which focused on AGMUS’s administrative technology and infrastructure. This study served as a basis for a “Technological Retreat,” which was held with executive, senior and middle management to discuss and develop strategies to expand the use of technology in academic processes. Specific recommendations include the expansion of web-enhanced courses and e-classrooms, integration of technological requirements into course syllabi, and faculty technological trainings and resources, among others.

The continued process to strengthen institutional planning, assessment and effectiveness at the institutional level began several years ago by assigning the position of Assistant Vice President for Planning at each institution. This was also reinforced last year by decentralizing the three statistician positions and moving them to the individual institutions. This has proved to be a correct step, increasing effectiveness in planning and assessment activities needed for the decision-making process. Emphasis this year turned to strengthening the institutional renewal cycle that ensures a continued integration of planning and assessment findings into the institutional budgets and work plans.

New construction, renovations and physical-plant development represent major steps in advancing AGMUS’ institutional mission. Three modern University Centers were inaugurated in Barceloneta (UNE), Yauco (UNE) and Naguabo (UT) to address student and labor-market needs along with relevant community programs and support services to foster regional socioeconomic development. As part of AGMUS’ public function, which aims to contribute to fostering regional economic development, the Vice Presidency developed the master plan for the present and future development of the INTENOR Science Park facilities. This unique innovation center will be in the heart of the pharmaceutical corridor and intended for innovation in research, human resources development and entrepreneurship.

Construction plans for 15 major projects were also designed and completed this year. Among them, UT’s physical master plan, the expansion of the Ponce University Center, UMET’s modern Communications Lab Center, the first phase of UMET’s Bayamón Center expansion and UNE’s Community Health Promotion Center, among others, WMTJ-Channel 40’s comprehensive digitalization project is near completion and AGMUS’ unique Virtual University master plan is ready, a perfect setting to support students to complete courses anywhere in the world through the use of the Internet.

The Vice Presidency of Planning and Academic Affairs is committed to continue the development and expansion of activities and projects that enhance AGMUS’ academic and institutional effectiveness and excellence, benefiting students, associates and the communities at large.
Beyond a traditional university, AGMUS is deeply engaged in the Island’s well-being and development. From promoting critical reflection and involvement in issues that affect our country through the Institute for Public Policy, advocating for the third sector as an effective social and economic force, endorsing regional multisector alliances that promote regional socio-economic growth and sustainability to educating young voters to exercise their right to vote, AGMUS is constantly pursuing relevant and responsive ways to connect, guide and summon our internal and external communities.

Confidence in AGMUS’s commitment and vision of excellence is reflected in many areas which have been recognized by students, parents, school officials and employers. For more than 13 years, enrollment has risen steadily, reaching an all-time high of 39,075 students during the 2007-08 academic year.

Thirty-seven percent (10,203) of the students who took the College Board in Puerto Rico in 2007 stated their preference for one of our institutions, a 3% increase from last year. This is the result of an integrated marketing campaign that included advertising, public relations, direct marketing, the Internet and other innovative strategies. For example, last year’s advertising campaign, “no excuses, only opportunities,” was awarded the Premio Cúspide by the Association of Advertising Agencies of Puerto Rico (AAPPR by its Spanish acronym) for the best educational-TV campaign. In terms of public relations, successful media-relation strategies result in a return on investment of more than $8 millions in publicity (advertising??), including print and electronic media coverage.

Our traditional annual School Tours, more than venues to disseminate our wide range of opportunities, focus on important issues for community improvement. This year’s campaign avowed “No to Violence: Educate & Transform Yourself,” with popular TV host and entertainer Yvette Cifredo as spokeswoman. Previous to the campaign, AGMUS identified public schools in areas that needed instruction and help to provide the student communities with a positive message and adequate tools to manage the different violent situations to which they are constantly exposed.

Recognized for quality in student services, at AGMUS, we strive for constant improvement and implementation of innovative initiatives to measure and enhance services and satisfaction. The Permanent Committee for the Enhancement of Student Services & Enrollment Processes, now in its second year, has become a center for monthly discussion of all aspects regarding student affairs. Initiatives capitalizing on the latest technological innovations, a student-opinion mailbox among others, are some of the new interactive ways that help us tailor more comprehensive and effective student services. This year, 1,713 (4.6%) students among all three universities voiced their opinions and suggestions through opinion mailboxes. Other initiatives being developed are a progressive model to transform evening, weekend and summer services, as well as fleshing out the online student-services model for AGMUS’ groundbreaking Virtual University. In addition, all incoming calls are now channelled through our new telephone Contact Center with improved speed and service, while providing feedback and other reports on telemarketing and advertising activities.

Scholarships, internships and employment placements are cornerstones of AGMUS’ strategy of excellence in student services. To open more doors for our three institutions, scholarship and internship development and promotion is now centralized, creating a unified resource that maximizes more opportunities based upon the combined resources of all three institutions. Similarly, this new comprehensive strategy is expected to provide fresh and expanded employment sources and opportunities to benefit students, community and employers in today’s challenging labor market throughout AGMUS’ Employment Placement Centers.

In addition, a number of initiatives addressing social responsibility and welfare were produced. For example, strategic alliances with Daddy Yankee’s “Corazón Guerrero” Foundation and Puerto Rico’s Juvenile Institutions Administration promote opportunities of hope and success through scholarships and
mentoring to deserving youth in juvenile institutions. This pioneering program, branded “Edúcate con Impacto” (Get an Education with Impact), awarded its first six scholarships this year. The Multisector Alliance for Intelligent Consumption, a government and industry alliance spearheaded by AGMUS in conjunction with the Puerto Rico Consumer Affairs Department (DACo) by its Spanish acronym was established. The resulting public service campaign, entitled “Muévete” (Get Going), aimed to educate the consumer in determining their choices and responsibilities while offering economic and environmental strategies to positively contribute to our country’s future.

The Vice Presidency also created a campaign to educate young voters on their responsibility to exercise their right to vote, resulting in the successful TV campaign “Vota o Quedate Calla’o” (Vote or Keep Quiet). During the first phase of the campaign on local TV stations, the State Elections Commission (CEE by its Spanish acronym) announced more than 195,000 new voter registrations and drew over 22,000 YouTube viewers with participation by such local and international figures as sports stars José Juan Barea and Carlos Delgado, artists Janina and Daddy Yankee, among others. AGMUS also joined local Uno Radio Group’s campaign “No te quites...piensa en los que te quieren” (Don’t give up... Think about those who love you), sponsoring positive and inspirational messages to promote public awareness and support in preventing suicides.

Investment in permanent weekly newspaper columns throughout the year—heralding student and faculty success stories as well as academic activities and programs, exhibitions, and sponsored community and campus activities with public personalities—are other ways in which we integrate our communities and cultivate AGMUS’ quality and excellence in services.

The Vice Presidency of Marketing & Student Affairs plans to continue to build the trust and confidence of the diverse sectors that make up our academic and external communities, always developing more responsive and innovative ways to promote AGMUS’ engagement in matters that impact our students and communities’ well-being and quality of life.
Service, security, technology, infrastructure, landscaping, utilities, purchases... The scope of the Vice Presidency of Administrative Affairs extends as far as you can see within AGMUS. Guided by a deep sense of commitment to the system, the VP of Administrative Affairs’ high standards of quality and excellence are evidenced by the system’s well-kept grounds, buildings and pleasantly designed surroundings, integrating a cozy, welcoming atmosphere that invites community sharing and learning as part of the system’s branding.

Averaging around 250,000 visitors a month in 2007, AGMUS facilities continued to be among the safest and most pleasant places to study, work and visit in Puerto Rico. When compared with other public and private universities on the Island, the incidence of criminal offenses is extremely low, according to U.S. Department of Education statistics for 2004-2006.

Emphasis on security, safety, operational integration and courteous service is part of our trademark. For the fourth-consecutive year, AGMUS received the Puerto Rico Manufacturers Association’s Occupational Safety Award. Associates and contractors are trained to ensure safety, quality of services and effectiveness. As part of our quality and branding strategy food concessionaires now wear the distinctive colors that represent each campus and participate in required nutritional and food management training. Accessibility for people with disabilities is and will continue to be a priority.

In 2007, more than $10 million in new infrastructure, renovations, technology and equipment was invested, surpassing original goals by 40%, while ensuring new construction and renovations adhere to best practices that protect the environment, are efficient and cost-effective.

Several strategies were implemented to contain the rising costs of construction, energy and services. A committee was established to evaluate, analyze and make recommendations to maximize the use of administrative and technological resources to reduce energy costs. Some of the implemented strategies included: installing energy-efficiency measurement devices and controllers, lighting-control sensors, closing and/or regulating facilities use on holidays, among others. As a result of these strategies, despite an increase in enrollment, extended hours of service and a 75,000-square-foot building capacity increase across AGMUS, as well as significant increases in the cost of energy, this year we accomplished a 2 million kWh reduction in energy consumption, with savings of more than $625,000.

**INITIATIVES TO CAPITALIZE ON UP-TO-DATE TECHNOLOGY INCLUDE:**

- Technological enhancements such as MP2, our computerized asset-maintenance and purchasing management system.
- Automated electronic-security equipment.
- Electronic parking and access controls to improve safety, service and efficiency.
- Providing important statistics, reports, projections and other relevant information that help establish continuously improved service and cost-effectiveness.
- Counter Point is used to manage printing and bookstore services, facilitating tracking of inventory, print orders and daily sales, among others.

Revenue generated by AGMUS’s auxiliary businesses, which include in-campus bookstores, cafeterias, vending machines, parking lots and printing services, totaled over $1 million. Such activities not only maintain our Vice Presidency of Administrative Affairs as a self-sustained operation, but also allow it to reinvest in service, equipment and technology improvements as part of our commitment to quality and excellence to benefit the AGMUS community and visitors.

Future projections include increased technology use to expand options for learning and teaching, construction and upgrading of facilities to accommodate new programs and seeking additional sustainable strategies to become even more efficient. System-wide integration and collaboration between our experienced work teams, together with sound management practices, will continue to be key players in efforts to be the best in the business.
Emerging from the institutional quality and effectiveness philosophy that has guided AGMUS over the years, the Vice Presidency of Human Resources promotes the system’s organizational development centered on its most valuable resource, our associates and faculty.

Continuous training is our priority. Last year we held 123 activities tailored to strengthen and develop our employees’ technological and interpersonal competencies according to their needs and roles. Activities included Quality Improvement certification of 65 associates by the American Society for Quality and participation of 42 associates from our three universities in our Management Academy, which develops an individualized eight- to 12-section program for every participant, establishing an individual profile and identifying strengths and needs to develop core management competencies.

Striving for a competitive and motivating work environment, AGMUS offers a comprehensive benefits package that is constantly updated and enhanced. Our 100% company-paid individual- and family-healthcare plan features a Wellness Program, which started as a pilot program last year, and was extended to all our UMET staff and most of UNE and Central Administration staff this year. The Wellness Program evaluates each employee’s medical and nutritional condition and designs a custom-made healthcare and nutritional plan.

“Nutrición XPress,” our weekly electronic newsletter, presents different health topics and advice to our associates. Preventive and educational initiatives like these and others, resulted in an effective cost control of our Healthcare Plan, leading to a 12.8% increase this fiscal year, which includes 202 new members, compared with the average 22% market-increase tendency rate.

Our savings and investment 401(k) plan has continually increased participants and is up to 701 participants this year. AGMUS promotes active employee participation and education in managing their accounts. This year we introduced life-cycle funds, a self-managing funds program personalized to meet employee’s individual retirement goals.

Significant achievements in the areas of operations and organizational development this year included the implementation of a new and more streamlined administrative salary-compensation structure, validated by an external consulting agency, which provides pay scales based on the position and qualifications of the associate or applicant. The new system helps reduce turnover, allowing AGMUS to remain competitive and to hire and retain the best talent.

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Our Office of Organizational Development completed different activities and staffing analyses at UMET and at all 13 off-campus University Centers (UCs) to ensure improved job efficiency and that the required positions are fulfilled according to the particular needs. Along with training sessions, job descriptions were revised, duties and responsibilities were delineated and the scope of shared supervision was emphasized. One of the most important results is the implementation of a standardized organizational chart based on the specific needs of each UC. This strategy allowed us to hire 100% of the required UC positions this year and to increase effectiveness and quality of services.

The use of technology in Human Resources is an integral component of our commitment to increase efficiency and reduce paperwork, therefore supporting the environment. The hiring process—postings, applications, profiles, resumes—is conducted through our web page, where applicants can apply for a specific position or for the Applicant Pool. Applicant Pools are cleaned up every six months, allowing us to keep the system up-to-date with qualified applicants. In addition, AGMUS’s associates and faculty can now access our enhanced web page, allowing for searches, printing and consultation of forms, information and the Human Resources Policy and Procedures Manual.

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Through community and social assistance Programs, we collaborate with several nonprofit community organizations in fund-raising, community services and other activities. In addition, partnerships were established to assist municipal governments with training in Quality Management and outreach activities. This is our way of supporting AGMUS’s social responsibility efforts.

Future plans include the enhancement of the Management Academy, expansion of the Wellness Program and more trainings for associates to become more effective and maintain a healthy, motivating work environment.
EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR HISPANIC LEARNERS

Over four years ago, AGMUS Ventures, a joint partnership with Regis University in Colorado, came into existence, inaugurating the Metro Orlando Campus (MOC) and a unique academic offer featuring the Discipline-Based Dual Language Immersion Model®. The first dual-language program at the university level, the model was custom-made specifically for Hispanic adults who need to expand their English-language skills to be admitted into college. Less than three years later, in 2006, the 50/50 dual-language immersion program has proven highly popular among Hispanic adults, offering accelerated five-week undergraduate and graduate AHORA courses and degrees in specialized areas such as business administration, education, hotel management, computers and health sciences, among others, customized from AGMUS’s UMET, UNE and UT academic offerings.

This year, the Discipline-Based Dual Language Immersion Model® was granted the “2008 Excelencia in Education” award by the Washington-based nonprofit Excelencia Organization, which aims to strengthen and promote strategies and programs that advance higher-education success for Latino students. Our continuing goal is to strengthen the Discipline-Based Dual Language Immersion Model® and continue expanding academic offerings in an accelerated and dual-language modality, preparing the best bilingual professionals with the skills and knowledge to transform and contribute to their communities.

Seven new certified offerings this year include master’s in Accounting, Finance, Public and Nonprofit Management, Strategic Management, Adult Education, Bilingual Education and a bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood Education. In addition, the dualLanguage modules were upgraded, integrating specific language objectives in addition to the content objectives, assuring measurable language-performance standards in both languages for every course. All our professors are 100% certified in the dual-language modality, and new bilingual-training workshops are underway, as well as being available online.

Another important achievement was the introduction of a transition program on both campuses to address the adult population that does not meet the minimum requirements of the accelerated five-week AHORA program: 23 years of age, three years of higher education experience and at least 24 attempted credits. This one-year program eases adaptation into AHORA, with close mentoring and longer eight-week courses. In its first year, the transition program proved a success, accomplishing 90% retention of the 141 students enrolled, with more than 90% of the participants achieving more than a 2.0 GPA.

A vital part of its public mission is to address the needs of Florida’s Latino communities and transform both campuses into centers that benefit the community. To that effect, more than 120 direct community and educational activities were organized in our facilities, including Hispanic Heritage Month activities, as well as an agreement to use the SFC facilities in the morning, with Broward County to offer its free English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and HighSchool Equivalency courses to over 250 residents, and the Broward County Hispanic Bar Association to use the SFC facilities for their workshops. We are also active members of various local and international professional Hispanic organizations in support of bilingual education and the socio-economic development of Latino communities.

Most importantly, this year AGMUS created the Vice Presidency of United States and Latin American Affairs to develop the foundation for continued expansion, accessibility and recognition of AGMUS’s distinctive dual-language programs in the U.S. and Latin America, in addition to supporting and empowering AGMUS Ventures and the Florida campuses in their continued growth and self-sufficiency. The Vice Presidency is actively exploring several strategies for Hispanic-market viability and expansion, including online development of the dual-language offerings, new campuses and additional partnerships with other universities.

A cornerstone of this expansion is the creation of an Online Task Force that is working with AGMUS, AGMUS Ventures and Regis University to convert two existing online programs into the dual-language modality: the Regis MS in Organizational Leadership and an MBA in Management with UT. Market-research and feasibility studies were conducted in three U.S. regions, in addition to Panamá and Chile, and focus groups were held in Miami and Los Angeles.

April 14, 2008: Forty students from eleven Latin American countries saw their dreams come true when they received their diplomas in the first commencement ceremony of South Florida Campus.
Our mission at the Vice Presidency of Financial Affairs is to continue solidifying AGMUS’ fiscal base, and we are approaching this priority from both financial and human perspectives. As an educational institution, we are not exempt from society’s socioeconomic conditions as a whole and, more than ever, financial responsibility and stability are fundamental to the well-being and success of our system.

The Budget Office, created over a year and a half ago within our Budget and Analysis Department, has been a definite asset in evaluating and establishing financial tendencies, history and indicators that help us detect and modify prospect areas within our system—giving us the opportunity to take actions that reduce costs and maximize returns from a more knowledgeable and secure standpoint.

AGMUS’ Endowment Fund (“Fondo Dotal”), a highly important asset to our system’s well-being, continues to increase in value and was estimated at $46 million in July. Moreover, we continue to participate in the NACUBO (National Association of College & University Business Officers) endowment study, which provides a comprehensive assessment of our own and comparable endowments by size, asset allocation, rate of return, payout rate, among other indicators, and has become another valuable tool in mapping our decisions and investment policies. Part of the earnings are redirected into a Scholarship Endowment Fund to provide scholarships and support new programs and initiatives, among other benefits.

State and federal financial-aid funds totaled near $200 million this year alone, and, as an indicator of the effectiveness of our fiscal management practices, for the third-consecutive year, external auditors have certified our management of these external funds. In the same manner, the U.S. Department of Education fully recertified UMet and Une’s licenses regarding the management of these funds as Full Participants with no restrictions up to the year 2011.

Notably, this year, we have seen an incremental reduction in our increasing spending patterns compared to last year due, in part, to more restrictive financial planning, postponing, evaluating and limiting our discretionary costs, as well as promoting conscious spending. For example, when planning activities or seminars that previously might have been contracted with outside sources, we sponsored our own resources and facilities at substantial savings.

On the technological front, our exclusive financial-aid electronic-loan application web page was launched this year, specifically developed as a joint effort by our financial-aid specialist and an outside consultant—and we are already moving into a second phase that will incorporate additional safety controls and integrate with the Center—in Metro Orlando and South Florida—addressing their particular profiles and needs. This page has become a fundamental tool that allows students access to their personal account and aid status, the array of financial aid available in our system, including loan alternatives and requisites by bank, electronic applications and qualifications, recommendations, disclosures, among other information.

An essential component of our financial department’s success at AGMUS is the people who make up our system—the faculty, associates and students alike. Cost-reduction measures alone are not enough to achieve success, so we are promoting a participatory, responsible and sustainable financial culture within all departments in our system by maintaining close communication, as well as providing continuous training within our own department to keep our associates abreast of new policies and procedures so we can cohesively and effectively accomplish our goals.

At the same time, concurrent with enhanced student financial services and accessibility to the array of aid available to help finance their education, we have intensified our Financial Counseling Program, emphasizing student awareness of future financial responsibility and management regarding budgeting, spending and acquiring loans. Our efforts serve two purposes—creating financially aware and responsible citizens, as well as reducing our fiscal risk regarding student defaults in the federal student-loan program.

In summary, the Vice Presidency of Financial Affairs is banking on sound, assertive fiscal measures to diversify our income and reduce costs, promoting responsible planning and spending from top management down, and an all-inclusive strategy from which we can reap the maximum benefit of our actions and decisions with the minimum financial impact possible.
Committed to graduate highly educated, professional and technologically competent students, Universidad del Turabo’s mission is twofold: to foster excellence in teaching while promoting research, innovation and the internationalization of its programs, together with the development of ethical principles and values that contribute to the community’s well-being through socially knowledgeable and responsible citizens.

With seven schools in the areas of Business and Entrepreneurship, Engineering, Education, Health Sciences, Science and Technology, Social Sciences and Humanities and, now in its second year, International Design, UT’s varied academic offerings span 44 undergraduate, 28 master’s and five doctoral degrees, as well as two-year associate programs and certificates in technical programs (CTPs).

UT’s total enrollment in 2007 reached 15,080, the highest in the system. Total graduates in 2007 reached an all-time high of 2,136, nearly doubling in the past three years. Also notable is UT’s first-time entering-freshmen retention rate at 69.8%.

New offerings in 2007 included a Ph.D. in Naturopathic Medicine, the only one of its kind in Puerto Rico, the Caribbean and Latin America, and undergraduate degrees in Graphic Design, Industrial Design and Computer Engineering. CTPs and associate degrees included Computer Systems, Medical Billing, Paralegal Training, Cisco Networks, Criminal Justice, Fashion Design, Sports Programs and Business Creation and Administration, among other courses relevant to regional industry needs.

Also new this academic year, the five university centers, in Cayey, Naguabo, Yabucoa, Isabela and Ponce, now extend graduate offerings through accelerated adult AHORA educational programs. This year, the Naguabo Center inaugurated technologically updated facilities, addressing the region’s growing labor-market needs.

This year also witnessed UT’s first doctoral-degree graduates in Business Administration majoring in Management and Information Systems. Additionally, UT awarded 2,000 degrees in 2007: 964 bachelor’s, 845 master’s, 107 technical certificates and 79 associate degrees.

UT obtained important specialized accreditations from such organizations as the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) for its Mechanical Engineering Program; the Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education (CADE) for the Dietetics & Nutrition Program; and the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) for the Nursing Program.

We are also in the process of obtaining other specialized accreditations from the following institutions:

- AACSB Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business
- CSWE Council on Social Work Education
- APA American Psychological Association
- ACEJMC Accredited Education in Journalism & Mass Communication
- ACS American Chemistry Society
- CAAASLP Council on Academic Accreditation in Audiology and Speech
- TEAC Teacher Education Accreditation Council
- NASAD National Association of Schools of Art and Design
- CIDA Council for Interior Design Accreditation
UT has established national and international cooperation alliances and agreements with major universities and organizations to enrich student and faculty educational experiences and to advance academic research. This year, 122 students participated in local and international internships involving the National Aeronautics & Space Administration (NASA), Texas A&M University, Johns Hopkins University and universities from Spain, the Dominican Republic and other countries.
Continued emphasis on the faculty’s professional development and excellence accounted for 40 professors pursuing doctoral degrees this year and a great number of faculty research projects and expositions in sciences, math, engineering and education, among others. UT is working with local and international faculty, scholars and students, offering several specialties that allow doctoral-program graduates to advance their theoretical and practical knowledge and obtain a global and up-to-date vision of their respective areas of study.

A few highlights from this year:

- Thanks to more than $2 million in contributions from local engineers and other construction-industry collaborators as part of AGMUS’s Capital Campaign, construction of the second story of UT’s School of Engineering, to almost double the school’s size, began in 2007. The project will include labs for electrical engineering courses, information and research systems, faculty offices and new classrooms.
- The School of Business and Entrepreneurship welcomed Dr. Félix Rogelio Flores from Universidad de Colima, Mexico, the first Fulbright scholar-in-residence, to collaborate with faculty and lecture in qualitative and market-research strategies in Strategic Management. The school dean was also presented with the San Juan Bautista School of Medicine in Caguas and a Pre-Medicine Binary Program that allows students immediate admission to the School of Medicine.
- A new undergraduate degree in Nursing Sciences offered at the St. Kitts International University of Nursing through an alliance with our Social Sciences and Humanities faculty.
- A new online publication of articles and research papers from our Sciences and Technology School in conjunction with Manati Medical Center’s neurosurgery group.
- The Center for Excellence in Advanced Technology (CETA) almost doubled its enrollment to 174 students from 91 last year, and offered new academic programs comprising pharmaceutical, engineering and technological courses. In a joint venture between the pharmaceutical industry and the Municipality of Barceloneta, CETA was assigned $1.8 million this year by Abbott Laboratories International to equip Biotechnology, Pharmaceutical Processes and Mechanical Engineering labs.
- To foster the development of our students and in the neighboring northern-central communities of the island, UT’s Employment Center placed 572 participants this year, and increased participating employers to 827 from 765 last year. Joint initiatives to spur local entrepreneurship and new businesses included the Community Micro-enterprise Development and Incubator Center funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Technical Training Program funded by INTECO (Spanish acronym for the Eastern-Central Technological Initiative, a multisector alliance promoted by AGMUS to advance regional socioeconomic development).
- In athletics, UT proudly acknowledges our “Tainos” excellent track and field record once again this year, achieving a number of championships and subchampionships at the Interuniversity Athletic League competitions, and securing awards that included the 2007 Global Tournaments Champions, and the Most Valuable Athlete of the Tournament for Females and Males, among many others.
- The integral development of our academic and neighboring communities’ social, cultural and humanistic values is intrinsic to our mission. For more than 15 years, the Museum and Center for Humanistic Studies (now Dr. Josefina Camaño de la Nuez) preserves, studies and disseminates Puerto Rico’s cultural, historical and artistic heritage. Construction of the museum’s second phase is scheduled to begin in 2008-09 and will include seven new exhibit halls and a sculpture garden that will house permanent and visiting collections thanks to fundraising efforts, including AGMUS’s Capital Campaign. The Museum also hosted activities to honor notable local and international artists, as well as its traditional commemorative celebration of our founder’s anniversary.

Constantly expanding our original collections, UT’s library gained numerous important, manuscripts and documentation this year from renowned Puerto Rican and international intellectuals such as Myrna Casas, Edgardo Rodriguez Juliá and Arcadio Díaz Quiñones, among others. This year, UT also inaugurated “Mi Ricón de Lectura,” the first preschool-children’s library within a secondary education institution in Puerto Rico, as part of the Puerto Rico government’s “Lee y Sueña” project, funded by the state and municipal governments.

Among efforts to foster the development of ethical and civic values in students and the community at large, the Institute of Applied Ethics hosted a series of forums on Ethics and Corruption from different perspectives, including the media and government; completed the review of UT’s curriculum to integrate ethics into the curriculum—already integrating an ethics module into the Freshman Year Seminar; and completed a study on Community Services.

UT’s ongoing academic plans include continued expansion of its undergraduate and graduate offerings; reinforcement of student services and support during nontraditional hours; and converting UT into a Teaching Research Institution by increasing the number of research faculty, incorporating students into research projects and fostering a culture of research in the academic programs.
Focused on its goal of becoming the best undergraduate research institution in Puerto Rico and a model in science, technology, pre-engineering and mathematics (STEM), Universidad Metropolitana (UMet) was one of 10 U.S. higher-education institutions selected in 1995—and the only one in Puerto Rico—to become part of the Model Institutions for Excellence (MIE) program funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF).

The 11-year cooperative agreement included more than $27 million to increase the number of STEM B.S. degrees conferred annually to underrepresented Latino students, and provide the support and motivation to successfully complete and subsequently enroll in Master’s degree and Ph.D. programs. In the 11-year period, over 100 MIE program students completed undergraduate STEM degrees, and 10 are completing their doctorates.

Thanks to MIE’s collaboration, UMet is on a steady path to accomplishing its research goal, with a solid technology infrastructure, curriculum innovation and faculty development and enhancement, scholarships, and other academic support strategies.

This year, Dr. Juan F. Arratia, director and principal investigator for UMet’s MIE project since 1998, was designated executive director of a newly created Student Research Development Center designed to replicate and disseminate MIE’s best practices to Universidad del Turabo and Universidad del Este. New funds were assigned by the NSF to continue this successful program. Dr. Arratia was also presented the 2008 Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Engineering Mentoring (PAESMEM) at a ceremony held in the White House in Washington, D.C. The award recognizes the vital importance of mentors in the academic and personal development of underrepresented minority students and colleagues in STEM fields.

Creative research is one of the best ways to prepare students to become persistent and successful in graduate school and in their professional careers as scientists. Among the strategies devised to increase student involvement and motivation in research and STEM fields are cooperative and collaborative learning, technology literacy, scientific writing and co-authorship, presentations at scientific conferences, as well as creating effective pathways from high school through the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Achievements to date include:

• The Pre-College Program—Comprised of 65 schools serving 123 students from grades 10-12 to help bridge the transition to college through training of elementary, middle- and high-school teachers. The program also features a Saturday Academy and a Summer Science Adventure where potential young scientists are involved in research activities and projects mentored by UMet faculty members.

• The Undergraduate Research Program—MIE scholars are required to participate during the semester in a research program at UMet’s advanced labs, mentored by research faculty members. Summer undergraduate-research internships and exchanges are available to STEM majors at NSF-sponsored sites and international institutions. Last year, 80 undergraduate students were involved in research projects in which 35 professors and 122 students participated in undergraduate-research internships in Puerto Rico, the U.S., Singapore, Australia, Spain, Italy, Costa Rica and Ethiopia.

• The Bridge to Graduate School Program—Includes a Science Support Center and an English-Language Component to boost student’s academic achievement. Students are also assisted with future career and graduate-study planning and information on admissions processes in STEM-field trends. These efforts have resulted in 86 STEM students continuing their graduate studies. To date, four have completed Ph.D. degrees, 28 completed master’s degrees, 31 are conducting studies toward their Ph.D., 17 are in master’s degree programs and eight are studying medicine.

• Faculty and Student Development—Collaborative agreements with more than 30 U.S. universities and 15 national and regional research centers and foreign organizations have resulted in faculty exchanges and opportunities for student research that have enriched the academic offerings of all AGMUS institutions.
In addition to Science & Technology, UMET features five dynamic academic schools in Business Administration, Education, Environmental Affairs, Health Sciences and Social Sciences, Humanities and Communications. UMET’s varied academic programs span 33 Baccalaureate, 23 Master, two Postgraduate Certificate degrees and two Doctoral degrees, as well as 13 two-year Associate Degree Programs and 19 Certificates in Technical Programs (CTPs).

Total enrollment at UMET reached 11,702 in 2007, a 33% growth over the past five years, with the largest increase (82%) evidenced at the three University Centers in Bayamón, Jayuya and Aguadilla. Total graduates increased 21.5%, with 1,878 degrees awarded in 2008.

The curriculum is continually updated to keep abreast of new technologies and local and international trends in economic, marketplace and demographic fields. New programs this year included undergraduate degrees in Nursing, Elementary Physical Education, Information Systems and associate degrees in Computer Repair and Network Installation, Architectural Drafting and Insurance.

The Communications Program of the Social Sciences, Humanities and Communications School was expanded to include three new academic majors in Public Relations, Digital Production and Media Management. With an investment of more than $1 million, UMET will be launching a new comprehensive state-of-the-art communications center where students will have the opportunity to transfer their classroom learning to hands-on experiences. The new facilities will be equipped with a broadcast studio, control room, auditorium for lectures and long-distance courses, four audiovisual editing rooms, graphic-design computer lab, digital audio-production room and faculty offices.

Continuing Education courses relevant to the personal and professional development of young, adult and senior populations served 6,879 participants during FY 2007-2008, with offerings that addressed healthcare, education, technology, insurance, social work, College Entrance Examination preparedness skills, languages and other special-interest courses.
UMET’s commitment to relevant local and international activities and projects and opportunities in all academic programs is reflected in its constant forging of collaborative partnerships and the development of funding resources to support students, faculty and community development. More than $11 million in private, federal and state government grants, mediated by the Office of External Resources, provided a large number of initiatives ranging from program enhancement, student retention and support, teacher trainings, scholarships, community services and other efforts in harmony with the institution’s mission.

• In 2007, 115 students were granted local and international internships and exchanges. Forty-one students in Environmental Affairs and Science programs participated in a new exchange program with UFAM (Federal University of the Amazonas), Universidade Estadual do Norte Fluminense (UENF) in Brazil or in local environmental agencies' and organizations' internships. A collaborative partnership with CSIC (the acronym for the Spanish National Research Council), the internationally renowned scientific research organization from Spain, awarded scholarships to students in environmental agencies’ and organizations’ programs, the AHORA (Accelerated Adult education) program and other areas—as part of our commitment to quality and excellence. A Faculty Technological Training Center also will be inaugurated in 2008 to strengthen technological know-how and integrate it into teaching and learning strategies.

• Fullbright visiting scholars and fellows this year collaborated with UMET Faculty in Communications, Biosciences, Mathematics, Environmental and other fields from renowned universities in Brazil, Egypt, Rumania, Russia, United Kingdom, Israel and South Africa.

• A new Community Service Project was developed where students in the Social Work Program will coordinate and address the needs and services of local and academic communities through a credited course. This endeavor will provide a valuable service for different sectors of adjacent communities while furthering students’ awareness of civic and social responsibilities as well as provide practical experience and knowledge in their respective fields.

• Varied training programs provided updated teaching strategies to 1,085 active teachers in the development and integration of scientific, technological, educational and environmental resources into the K-12 curriculum and classrooms of private and public schools in Puerto Rico.

• An educational initiative grant helped improve 10 academically lagging public schools, working directly with teachers, parents and school directors. An additional professional development program for school directors provides them with courses and workshops credited toward a doctorate in Education.

• With INTENOR (the Spanish acronym for the Northern Technological Initiative, one of four multisector alliances AGMUS promotes to advance Puerto Rico’s socioeconomic development), we launched an Eco-Business Project, sponsoring the first six environmentally oriented businesses in Puerto Rico’s Northern Region. Eco-Business Projects range from sustainable energy alternatives and urban development to the design, management and production of recycled and biodegradable materials. Projects will be developed at INTENOR’s business incubator in the municipality of Barcelona. In addition, a joint UMET-INTENOR R&I Innovation Center is in the works to promote entrepreneurship and the application of commercially viable projects that promote job creation.

• A series of economic development conferences and lectures from national and international organizations featured visits from the renowned CSIC (acronym for the Spanish National Research Council) the president & CEO of the Science Foundation of Arizona (SFA), Dr. William Harris, who was instrumental in Ireland’s economic transformation; and Dr. Chun-Yen Chan, director of National Taiwan Normal University’s Science Education Center, on Taiwan’s Science & Technology Educational System, among others.

• As part of our goal to improve academic services for First-Year Students and set priorities in our strategic actions toward retaining our recruitment, we conducted the conference Enhancing Retention through Assessment and Tracking of Learning Outcomes. Dr. Vincent Tinto, a Syracuse University professor and experienced researcher in higher education, particularly in student retention and graduation, was the keynote speaker and advisory resource.

• Collaboration with Cornell University, in Ithaca, N.Y., was established to develop a strategic business plan to strengthen and renew the fiscal and intrinsic relevance of the Arecibo Observatory—home of the world’s largest single-dish radio telescope—to the local and international academic, scientific and general communities.

Our faculty’s research capabilities and commitment to excellence are evidenced by the approval of a patent for one of our professor’s work to develop a compound to reduce cancerous tumors, as well as a number of publications, research projects and expositions in the health, sciences, technology and education fields.

A notable achievement this year involves improvements to the approval rates in the nursing board exams, increasing from 40% last year to 80% in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program, and from 21% to 45% in the Associate Degree in Nursing (AND) program.

Our international business professor, Dr. Nicolás Rosario, was the first Puerto Rican to receive the prestigious Trio Achievers Award this year by the Council for Opportunity in Education, in Chicago, Illinois. The award recognizes individuals who have overcome class, social and/or cultural barriers to access higher education and become successful professionals and examples to their communities.

Dr. Carlos Padín was selected as a U.S. Department of Agriculture Fellow to collaborate with other fellows and USDA scientists and officials in Washington, D.C. on food security, leadership, biotechnology and agribusiness research and management issues.

María de los Ángeles Lugo, director of UMET’s library, received the Leadership in the Use of New Information Technologies to Expand & Facilitate Access to Serials Content Award by the American Council of University Research Information Libraries [ACURL].

In athletics, UMET proudly acknowledges the outstanding participation of its Cocodrilos in 71% of the sports offered in the Interuniversity Athletic League competitions, securing a number of medals and setting four new records in the women’s triple jump, long jump, 4x100m and 4x400m, and also in hammer throws. We are also proud to congratulate Asuncion Ocasio Rodríguez, Social Work undergraduate at UMET’s main campus, who achieved a prominent fifth position in the XXIX Summer Olympic Games in Beijing, China in the Taekwondo Women’s Welterweight (57-67 kg).

Coral Metropolitana de San Juan, ambassadors of our music and culture, continued their international journey through their visit to Central and South America. The choir had the opportunity to participate in a variety of professional workshops and performed several concerts at the Fourth Festival of University Choirs celebrated in Quito, Ecuador. UMET’s students, faculty and athletes excel locally and internationally, placing our institution on the right track for future developments that will reaffirm our commitment toward academic excellence, student and community services and support of Puerto Rico’s socioeconomic development.
After more than five decades of educational tradition and commitment to excellence in educational services to the Puerto Rican community, Universidad del Este (UNE) continues to reinvent itself in its efforts to provide access to academic services as it meets the needs of public organizations, as well as of the market and industries on local and global levels.

Chancellor Alberto Maldonado Ruiz, who has been leading the institution for the past 20 years, has secured continuous growth, development and stability for the organization and made significant contributions to higher education on the Island. The institutional mission—to promote the integral development of a diverse student population through research, critical-creative thinking, the construction of knowledge and its application—continues to lead the institution in a pursuit of excellence.

UNE offers undergraduate degrees in Business Administration, Education, Science and Technology, Health Sciences, Social and Human Sciences and Hotel Management and Culinary Arts; and in Education, Business Administration, Social Work and Criminal Justice at the graduate level. Recently licensed programs include master’s degrees in Information Security Management, Information Technology and Virtual Business Development as well as Special Education Curriculum and Teaching; undergraduate degrees in Culinary Management and Elementary and Secondary TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language). Academic programs are accredited by the Middle States Association Commission of Higher Education and locally licensed by the Puerto Rico Higher Education Council. Further accreditations include the Joint Review Committee on Education in Radiology Technology (JRCERT) and progress accreditations with the Association of Collegiate Business Schools and Programs, the Council on Social Work Education, the National League of Nursing and the Teacher Education Accreditation Council. With its main campus in Carolina, serving the northeastern region of the Island, UNE’s university centers extend its educational services to several towns in Puerto Rico: Utuado, Barceloneta, Yauco, Cabo Rojo and Santa Isabel. Enrollment has increased from 132 students in 1991 to 6,500 on the main campus and to 11,900 including the five University Centers.

Retention and graduation rates are high priorities at UNE. Initiatives that have been increasing the retention rate to the current 64.3% are led by Renacer (Awakening), a project that aims to strengthen student retention through early, intensive and continuous services. The project, based on the Tinto and Seidman retention theory, has been consistently securing the collaboration of faculty, academic advisors, counselors, parents and staff in commissions and committees in support of student learning and persistence. Likewise, basic English, Spanish and Math competencies are supported with labs and in-class tutoring. A significant accomplishment is that student athletes’ academic achievement improved 35% compared to last year thanks to the Athletes’ Committee.

The faculty’s ample academic research and creativity reflect the quality and service that distinguish UNE. This is evident in its publication record: “Ámbito de Encuentros”, the academic journal’s 2008 issue; three new books and numerous lectures and articles encompassing topics on public policy and politics, teaching and learning, energy and agriculture and women’s identities, among others. A Management Academy has been upgrading the administrative staff’s managerial skills with workshops for their professional and organizational development.
Infrastructure and technological resources are continually upgraded to support academic excellence and service for students and the community. Most recently, the first phase of an annex on Carolina’s main campus and an annex expansion for Yauco were completed. The Manati university center was relocated to a new facility in nearby Barceloneta with an array of academic offerings in Health Sciences—Nursing, Pharmacy and Sonography—to meet market needs. UNE’s Wi-Fi access project is 100% complete, with support and laptop loans available for students. Additionally, the development of a Community Health Promotion Center was begun, a site that will provide our health sciences students with clinical experiences as well as benefit the surrounding community.
In our public-function role, UNE has sponsored community healthcare-prevention events and educational activities, including campaigns to prevent teenage pregnancies, suicide, as well as against the consumption of alcohol and other drugs. UNE contributed academic resources and staff to the efforts of the municipality of Carolina and the University of Puerto Rico to develop "Escuela Pa’ los Duros", a science, math, technology and language school for secondary-school students. Information-technology and literacy workshops for students and continuing education for teachers and staff have been provided. In addition, our Employment Center provided job placement for 357 people, of which 102 were UNE students. Our Preschool Center continues to provide daycare and educational activities to 40 preschool children, with a kindergarten level opening in fall 2008.

To foster economic development and promote leadership and creativity in a local and global environment, UNE held the Second Forum of Inventors with the highlight being an Entrepreneurship Fair. The event showcased the development of creative ideas and promoted education to support inventors and entrepreneurs. UNE also continues to participate in Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE), an international nonprofit organization for the development of a new generation of entrepreneurs with a high sense of social responsibility. For the second year, UNE participants were selected as finalists in the 2008 local competition, while active in the development of a business plan for economic development El Yunque, the Island’s rain forest. For the North Eastern Technological Initiative (INTENE by its Spanish acronym), one of four island regional economic initiatives comprised of municipal governments, industries and universities, UNE continues to provide leadership. Most recently, an academic proposal for the development of an Inter-University Center at Roosevelt Roads was submitted to local and federal authorities. In keeping with the digital age, 12 promotional videos were completed to promote the Eastern Tourist Route, which are available on the web.

Collaborative educational partnerships, student and faculty internships and exchange programs, vital components that broaden integral development, have provided participation of 147 students in local and international internships, and four new universities have been added to the internship program.

In support of AGMUS’s internationalization efforts, UNE appointed the Vice Chancellor of International Affairs and the 2008-2009 Internationalization Work Plan was approved. Agreements are continually established with local and international academic and private institutions, creating new cultural and academic internships and exchanges for students and faculty. Academic experiences with Universidad de San Ignacio de Loyola (USIL) in Lima, Peru, and Universidad Tecnológica de Chile, among others, were conducted.
Center for Telecommunications and Distance Education Center

UNLOCKING THE BOUNDARIES TO EDUCATION

Responsible for integrating and advancing cutting-edge technological resources to support AGMUS’s distance-education strategy, the Center for Telecommunications and Distance Education (known as CETED by its Spanish acronym) oversees two areas: Distance Education, which is online and televised; and public television WMTJ-TV and WQTo-DT Channels 40/26—nuevavisión, which broadcasts original and affiliated educational and cultural programming, as well as televised instructional courses, among other services.

Recognized for it’s application of distance-learning technologies, CETED has been offering televised programs since the mid 1980s. As part of a system-wide policy centered on the use of the latest technology and nontraditional learning experiences to respond to the needs of a varied population locally, nationally and internationally, all distance academic courses and programs accredited by the three AGMUS institutions are constantly being renovated and expanded to bring them up-to-date with new technologies and with AGMUS’s vision of internationalization.

More than 110 faculty members have been certified in the distance-learning modality and, in the process, professors have been producing web-enhanced courses from the three AGMUS institutions to complement traditional classroom-based courses. Equally important, a comprehensive online student services system—from applications to enrollment to financial aid and other processes—is being developed to provide accessibility and success in the virtual environment.

CETED’s combined resources and experience as a leader in distance education and AGMUS’s goal to broaden educational opportunities and access to post-secondary education to Latinos worldwide, will keep innovating and customizing diverse learning environments and curriculum to empower learners across the globe.
Over 110 faculty members have been certified in distance learning techniques, and in the process have been producing supplementary courses for the three AGMUS institutions, to complement traditional in-presence courses.
For more than over 20 years, AGMUS’ WMTJ-TV/Channel 40 and WQTo-DT/Channel 26 have been in the forefront of televised educational programming and new long-distance technologies. Committed to our local audiences not only to offer educational programs, but also the highest-quality and visual definition, our biggest endeavor has been to digitalize all of our services. As established by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), all television broadcasting is to be digital as of Feb. 17, 2009. At WMTJ/nuevavisión we have been actively preparing to complete the digitalization process of all our programming and equipment. With an investment of more than $2 million in combined funds from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) and AGMUS, NuevaVisión has completed the physical structure, designed and built a completely digitalized Master Control Center with computer-automated broadcast equipment and acquired the latest equipment and technology to transform our production studios into vanguard high-definition facilities.

Simultaneously, the permit application for the construction of a new tower in El Yunque National Forest for a digital antenna was approved last year and, with a $516,000 AGMUS/NTIA investment, construction of the new tower is underway and expected to begin digital transmission Feb. 17, 2009.

Being the only noncommercial television station licensed to an educational institution in Puerto Rico, NuevaVisión/Channel 40 is committed to providing relevant, educational and sociocultural program alternatives to audiences of all ages.

New local productions this year included public service campaign spots aimed to eliminate violence against children and urging the public to register and vote in the political parties primaries and general elections; weekly current events programs like “Hablando de Asuntos Públicos” [Speaking about the Public’s Issues], sponsored by AGMUS’s Institute for Public Policy (IPP), which presents renowned guests in politics, business and academia that provide serious deliberation about our country’s important issues; our second season of “Situación límite,” an educational drama series that combines real-life stories with expert advice and a comprehensive look at challenging social issues like alcoholism, AIDS, domestic violence and others; and informational slots related to the transition to digital television.

Additionally, NuevaVisión produced more than 18 hours of special programming associated with the protection of environmental resources. Two series were developed and, through the broadcast and re-broadcast of the series, audiences received 45 hours of educational programming focused on environmental protection and the pursuit of solutions to two major environmental problems: solid waste management and the use and conservation of water as a natural resource. In 2008, AGMUS Institute for Public Policy and NuevaVisión jointly received the Region II 2008 Environmental Quality Award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for the solid waste management educational series “Serie Educativa Sobre el Manejo de Desperdicios Sólidos.”

Dedicated to continuing to offer quality educational alternatives in children’s programming, and to increasing the number of programs in Spanish, this year we broadcasted 2,031 hours of Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) children’s programming, including 10 new PBS children’s programs in Spanish.

As part of our public and community service mission, NuevaVisión has developed a number of workshops, forums and collaborative partnerships to support and enrich the lives of Puerto Rico’s communities. These included a series of workshops for youths in juvenile institutions to re-evaluate and awaken values and self-esteem and 12 new collaborative partnerships with Head Start facilities from central and eastern Puerto Rico to support the early reading program Ready to Lead in Literacy. For the third-consecutive year, NuevaVisión also was selected for Borders Book Drive, which encourages customers to buy and donate new children’s books to be distributed by NuevaVisión to parents and teachers of low-income communities in Puerto Rico. This year’s book drive rose to more than $13,945 in book donations.

These and other distinctive CETED and NuevaVisión initiatives attained a great deal of publicity through various media this year, equivalent to more than $165,000, which represented a 300% increase in public-interest and media coverage.
PROJECTIONS 2008-2009

• Final approval of AGMUS Virtual University Campus by accrediting agencies.

• Nueva Vision/Channel 40’s digital launching in February, 2009 in compliance with Federal regulations.

• Continue developing the system-wide student retention initiative with an academic approach, including a revised, long-term Strategic Retention Plan with specific goals and performance metrics.

• Establish a system-wide External Resources Strategic Plan in order to guide the efforts to substantially increase the amount of external funds and the expansion of sponsored programs and research.

• Strengthen and improve the performance of AGMUS Education graduates in the Teachers Certification tests (PCMAS).

• Continue strengthening a business-innovation culture as a model for economic growth through the creation of more business incubators and other strategic initiatives through the regional alliances (INTECO, INTENDOR, INTENE and DISUR), in order to promote regional sustainability.

• Continue educating and engaging public officials, the private sector, and the public at large in issues that affect our country through our Institute of Public Policy.

• Development of an Institute for the Study of Globalization at UMET.

• Develop and expand our Wellness Program system-wide, integrating research and education, and undertaking relevant issues like weight loss and diabetes wellness and prevention.
• Continue expanding Health Sciences Schools and programs system-wide through new construction and projects like UNE’s upcoming Community Health Promotion Center, the completion of new facilities for UMET’s Health Sciences school at Bayamón, and the design of new facilities for UT’s school in a 15-acres property near the campus.

• Establish collaborative agreements with Puerto Rico’s Department of Education in order to develop new technical programs in selected vocational schools throughout the island. The first of these partnerships will be developed at the new vocational school in Comerío.

• Expansion and transformation of our University Centers into regional and municipal activity centers that promote the socio-economic development of the region through cultural, educational, community and enterprise leadership.

• Establish a plan to expand undergraduate and graduate research through strategic initiatives that include the development of Centers of Excellence in research, the recruitment of faculty researchers with the highest credentials, and strengthening infrastructure and services to foster scientific activity. Among the specific research areas to be developed: Renewable energy, biotechnology and biomedicine, environmental sciences, engineering, health, and behavioral sciences.

• Continue exploring and expanding services to Hispanic markets within the US and Latin America.

• Begin the construction of the second phase of the Museum and Center for Humanistic Studies at UT with a total investment of $4.5 million including funds from main donors.

• Complete improvement projects at the Bayamón university center, including a new library and the new facilities of UMET’s School of Health Sciences.
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Ana G. Méndez University System has university centers in Cayey, Naguabo, Isabela, Ponce, Yabucoa, Aguadilla, Bayamón, Jayuya, Cabo Rojo, Yauco, Utuado, Barceloneta, Santa Isabel and two Campuses in Florida, USA.