

Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico, a U.S. commonwealth, just over a year ago (September 2017) and most educational institutions were severely impacted. Many are still recovering. As those on the island look to rebuild, it's important potential allies on the mainland are more aware of the enrollment and completion, funding patterns, and future challenges of higher education in Puerto Rico. Consider the following facts and trends:

Puerto Ricans are the second largest Latino population in the U.S. and are citizens.

- Of Latinos in the U.S., the largest populations are Mexican American (64%), and Puerto Rican (10%). All Puerto Ricans are American citizens at birth. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2017)

Demographic declines are impacting educational institutions in Puerto Rico.

- Over the last 3 years, there has been a decrease in K-12 enrollment (-16%), teacher retention (-35%), and school availability (-34%). This decrease continues to impact college readiness as well as the number of potential college goers.

Academic Year	Number Students	Percent Change	Number Teachers	Percent Change	Number Schools	Percent Change
2016-17	365,181	-	33,273	-	1,292	-
2017-18	346,096	-5%	32,119	-3%	1,131	-12%
2018-19	307,587	-16%	21,630	-35%	856	-34%

Source: Statistics from the Puerto Rico Department of Education as of Sept. 17, 2018.

Puerto Rico is small in size but has more colleges/universities than most states.

- Puerto Rico is comparable in size to Connecticut and bigger than the states of Delaware and Rhode Island put together (100 x 35 miles). (Retrieved on 10/6/18 at <https://islandsofpuertorico.com/facts/>)
- Puerto Rico ranked among the top 15 of U.S. states/territories in the number of colleges/universities (93). Michigan, Arizona, and Illinois are larger in size geographically but have less colleges/universities. (U.S. Department of Education, Digest of Education Statistics, 2017, Table 317.20)

The majority of colleges/universities in Puerto Rico are private institutions.

- The vast majority of colleges/universities are 4-year private, not-for-profit (45), followed by private, for-profit (25), 4-year public (14), 2-year private (5), and 2-year public institutions (4).

College enrollment in Puerto Rico has decreased even more than in the U.S. overall.

- Over 3 years (2014-16), student enrollment decreased 2% nationally, but 7% in Puerto Rico.
- While enrollment increased in public institutions (8%), enrollment at private non-profits decreased 8%. The largest loss in enrollment was in for-profit institutions (-20%).

Enrollment, U.S. and Puerto Rico, by Control, from 2014-15 to 2016-17

Academic Year	United States		Puerto Rico				Percent Change
	Total	Percent Change	Public	Private, Not-For-Profit	For-Profit	Total	
2014-15	17,292,787		56,415	110,474	45,593	212,482	
2015-16	17,036,778		58,850	106,626	39,128	204,604	
2016-17	16,869,212		60,785	100,334	36,445	197,564	
Change	-423,575	-2.4%	4,370	-8,656	-9,148	-14,918	-7.0%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Digest of Education Statistics, 2015, 2016, 2017, Table 304.80

The majority of colleges/universities in Puerto Rico are small and Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs).

- Over 90% of colleges/universities in Puerto Rico meet the federal definition of an HSI. Further, over 40% of HSIs in Puerto Rico enroll less than 1,000 Hispanic/Latino students. (*Excelencia in Education* analysis using U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Institutional Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 2016-2017 enrollment data)

Private institutions have higher student/faculty ratios than public institutions in Puerto Rico.

- At public institutions, the student to faculty ratio is significantly lower (12%) than at private institutions (24%) in Puerto Rico. (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Digest of Education Statistics, 2017, Table 314.50)

Degree completion increased in Puerto Rico even higher than in the U.S. overall, and despite the decrease in enrollment.

- Over 3 years (2013-15), degree completion increased 2% nationally, but 3% in Puerto Rico.
- While public institutions saw a decrease in degrees awarded over the most recent 3 years, degree completion increased at private and for-profit institutions.

Degree completion, U.S. and Puerto Rico, by Control, from 2013-14 to 2015-16

Academic Year	United States		Puerto Rico				Percent Change
	U.S. Total	Percent Change	Public	Private, Not-For-Profit	For-Profit	Total	
2013-14	3,807,474		9,922	20,428	4,897	35,247	
2014-15	3,846,662		9,602	20,558	6,031	36,191	
2015-16	3,892,494		9,394	21,178	5,646	36,218	
Change	85,020	2.2%	-528	750	749	971	2.8%

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics, 2015, 2016, and 2017, Table 319.10

Public investment in higher education in Puerto Rico is expected to decrease.

- Currently, the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) system receives approximately \$708 million annually, of which 70% is provided by public funds. (Puerto Rico Fiscal Agency and Financial Advisory Authority, AAFAF, 2018)
- The Puerto Rico Fiscal Agency and Financial Advisory Authority proposed in 2018 a fiscal plan to reduce public support to the University of Puerto Rico in 4 areas:
 - Consolidating campuses
 - Reducing UPR employee pensions
 - Reducing tuition exemptions and special scholarships
 - Increasing tuition over the coming years so that it is equivalent to the Federal Pell Grant minus the cost of living. (Puerto Rico Fiscal Agency and Financial Advisory Authority, AAFAF, 2018)

Job growth projections in Puerto Rico are highest in low-skill, low-paying jobs.

- Net job growth projections through 2019 suggest growth in vocational courses or associate degrees for lower-skill, lower-paying jobs such as those in: sales, food preparation and service, healthcare, construction, maintenance and repair, and office and administrative support. (Departamento del Trabajo y Recursos Humanos del Gobierno de Puerto Rico, DEPR CTE Vocational Course and Associate Degree Offering).