

Background Information

The Universidad Central del Caribe (UCC) opened its doors in 1976. UCC was the first private medical school incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Currently, the UCC is a health-sciences university with fully accredited academic programs in Medicine and Chiropractic. And academic programs in Medical Images Technology, Biomedical Sciences and Substance Abuse Counseling. The UCC faculty members carry out extensive studies in basic and clinical biomedical research and provide specialized health care services.

Since 1976, UCC has been committed to providing educational opportunities to students from underrepresented backgrounds and providing services to the communities where they live. Puerto Rico is home to a large number of Hispanic Americans. In fact, of the roughly 62.9 million Hispanic Americans, 3.2 million (5%) live in Puerto Rico <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/PR>. The percentage of Puerto Ricans who obtain a college education is high. According to the Educational Attainment 2022 census, 27% of all Puerto Ricans have completed bachelor's degree.

UCC strives to provide underrepresented students with excellent opportunities for advanced education. In 2009, UCC received authorization from the Puerto Rico Council on Higher Education (PRCHE) to confer a PhD in Cellular and Molecular Biology, and in 2011 UCC received authorization to award a PhD in Neuroscience.

In 2018, the UCC received authorization from The Council on Chiropractic Education (CCE) to confer a Doctor of Chiropractic; this degree combines a solid foundation in basic sciences and clinical skills, together with an in-depth immersion into the evidence-based chiropractic field. What this new program, the UCC has become the first and only Chiropractic School in Puerto Rico.

Number of faculty members in biomedical and behavioral science disciplines

The Institutional Faculty Roster including the School of Medicine, the Substance Abuse Counseling Program, the Medical Images Technology Program, the Graduate Program in Biomedical Sciences, and the School of Chiropractic, consists of a total of 159 full-time faculty members, there are 23 Professors, 61 Associate Professors, 73 Assistant Professors, and 2 Instructors. There are 115 part-time faculty members and 389 ad honorem faculty members who provide services as mentors in clinical sites. Of the full-time faculty, 18% hold Ph.D. degrees, 71% M.D. degrees, and 11% other degrees (BS, MS, Ed.D., MPH, DC). More than 90% of the faculty is Hispanic; the non-Hispanics are from different cultures and backgrounds including American, European, Asian, Indian, Arabic and Latin-American faculty members.

Number of faculty engaged in research and with external support

Of the 33 basic science faculty, 23 are engaged in biomedical and behavioral research. The corresponding number for the clinical and behavioral sciences research faculty is 36. Eighteen (18) faculty members receive external funding as PIs in 32 active grants. Many of the remaining faculty members, mainly those in the clinical sciences, are supported by external funding for various roles in these projects.

Efforts to provide services to the underserved community

University students and faculty are engaged in a variety of events and organizations providing a broad range of activities to the community. Services to and activities or underserved communities are organized into treatment services, health promotion events, and career orientation activities.

University students and faculty provide free health clinics where screenings for conditions and orientations promoting the prevention of health conditions for the community take place.

UCC students have organized interested groups dedicated to women and men health. These groups have been recognized for inspiring, nurturing, and sharing their knowledge with younger men and women

who aspire to become health professionals. They also coordinate gender-specific health events, for example, cardiovascular awareness events for women and prostate/testicular cancer events for men.

The Urban Medicine student group has also been recognized for providing treatment to homeless in Puerto Rico and its in Puerto Rico and its medical services in isolated communities in other Caribbean and Central American Countries.

UCC students and faculty also provide orientations to underrepresented undergraduate and high school students on how to become the next generation of healthcare professionals by gaining admission to college, graduate programs in the biomedical sciences, and health profession programs. The activities include visits to high schools and colleges, UCC campus tours, and a week-long “Introduction to Molecular Biology and Graduate School” hosted on the UCC campus.

Service to underrepresented populations goes from high school to the assistant professor level. UCC hosts underrepresented postdoctoral fellows and junior faculty members providing professional development activities and access to research equipment. These are not only available to UCC faculty but to faculty at other institutions on the island. This ensures an increase in the number of future underrepresented faculty members and funded researchers.

Total NIH R01 support in the last fiscal year

None

Institutional Data

Demographics of student body in the sciences

UCC has a total fall enrollment for current academic year (2022-2023) of 484 students, 37% male and 63% female. The racial and ethnic profile is Hispanic 97.2%, Asian 0.4%, American Indian or Alaska Native 0.2%, White 0.6%. and Race and ethnicity unknown 1.6%. The number of undergraduate students enrolled at UCC is 71 (100% underrepresented minority students). The number of students enrolled in graduate programs MS/PhD/DC are 121 and M.D. 292, 97.5% of the students in graduate programs come from underrepresented groups. The number of undergraduate students does not include students from other institutions on the island that visit UCC to perform research.

UCC has graduated for the current academic year (2022-2023) a total of 150 students.

Demographics of student body in the sciences	Fall 2022-2023
Graduation Data	Total No.
Undergraduate BS/AD	59
Graduate master’s degree	4
Graduate Doctorate degree (PhD, MD & DCP)	87
Total students graduated	150
Demographics of student body in the sciences	Fall 2022-2023
Graduation Data	Total No.
Hispanic/Latino	100%
Total students graduated	150