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The group Profesores Autoconvocados en Resistencia Solidaria (Self-Convened Professors in Resistance and Solidarity, PAREs, by its Spanish acronym) rejects the fiscal plan and the budgetary cuts to the University of Puerto Rico proposed by the Government and the Fiscal Oversight and Management Board. We thereby express our support to the list of demands approved at student assemblies and join the consensus reached among diverse groups within the University of Puerto Rico community, including the Chancellors of the UPR System and the Faculty of the Mayagüez and Río Piedras campuses, as well as very many other members of our society.

For over a hundred years, since its foundation in 1903, the University of Puerto Rico has been instrumental in the educational, economic, cultural, and scientific development of the country. It has made innumerable contributions including, among others, programs and services directly and indirectly impacting regional economies, as well as Puerto Rico's taxation and finance. Our University must, therefore, be an essential actor in the restructuring of the country. Together, as University community, we must reaffirm that the UPR and all sectors comprising it are prepared to actively participate and contribute in any economic development plan for Puerto Rico.

We believe that entering any debate or negotiation regarding budgetary cuts to the University amounts to accepting the false premise that austerity measures are beneficial to the country, or that the impact of public education can be measured in strictly financial terms. In every known case, this economic policy has brought about an increase in the debt and has intensified the fiscal crisis, with disastrous social consequences. Furthermore, the Fiscal Oversight Board seeks to impose austerity measures on behalf of a group of creditors and a debt, which has not been audited and clearly illegitimate, and even odious, issued at inconceivable rates of interest (as high as 800%) to a country lacking repayment capacity and under conditions virtually impossible to satisfy in the future. The odious debt doctrine establishes that "any debt not used in benefit of the people that contracted it is odious and can be rejected." (<http://www.auditoriadeuda.org.ec>)

The true cause of the crisis we now suffer goes beyond economic issues. It is a fundamentally political problem, arising from the most affected groups' lack of participation in the decision-making process. We are opposed to the hierarchical and undemocratic styles of governance responsible for the current situation, which were, moreover, assumed in disregard of the population and the University community.

The role of the University of Puerto Rico is vital for the formulation and execution of a sustainable economic development plan for Puerto Rico. Faced with the requirements of the Fiscal Oversight Board, it is imperative to press jointly for the public budget required to guarantee the University's ability to fulfill that unique role, both in the short and the long term. The proposals that have circulated for accruing additional income to the University do not acknowledge the enormous debt already owed to the University for services rendered both to the government and to local private corporations, and even federal corporations, or the low percentage retainable from these contracts by the institution. These proposals also fail to recognize the wider context of massive budget cuts to the United States federal agencies that subsidize cultural and academic endeavors.

The cuts proposed have been arbitrarily determined, increased from one proposal to the next. This has placed UPR in the same position of other well-known, debt-ridden agencies. The UPR's finances are more than solvent (in fact, as previously stated, we have an outstanding debt from the government and other agencies, as well as multiple

budget cuts during these last years, which have placed UPR in a very precarious situation). The public education system cannot, and will not, pay for other agencies' mismanagement problems, on very dubious terms, as this is utterly unfair.

Therefore, we propose that what the Fiscal Oversight Board honors for the 2017-2018 academic year be the UPR's current budget. This would enable the University not only to continue to operate, refining its work plans in consonance with the conditions of Puerto Rico and redistributing the current –already precarious– budget to that end, as needed, but also to allow our community to undertake a democratic reform that would arise from our expertise and commitment, that would of course enhance its potential and fulfill its institutional role. Only thus would the University be in a position to continue its unquestionably significant contribution to Puerto Rico's development.

We believe it is imperative and unpostponable to channel processes so as to avoid the destruction of Puerto Rico's public university education, of which UPR is the most emblematic project. We are requesting that on April 30 the President and the Governing Board hand in the current University budget, instead of the fiscal plan; that the members of the Fiscal Oversight Board accept it, and that they all join the University community in assuming the leading role that is incumbent upon us in the search for solutions to the very urgent crisis we are facing as a country.

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