

University of Miami Special Collections

Finding Aid - University of Puerto Rico Student Movement collection (ASM0675)

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University of Puerto Rico Student Movement collection

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Summary information

Repository:	University of Miami Special Collections
Title:	University of Puerto Rico Student Movement collection
ID:	ASM0675
Date:	2010-2011 (date of creation)
Physical description:	30,061 KB
Language:	Spanish
Language:	English
Dates of creation, revision and deletion:	

Administrative history / Biographical sketch

Note

On the night of April 20, 2010, following an initial forty-eight hours stoppage, a group of students from the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) met at the Río Piedras campus to organize an indefinite strike. They did so in response to the University administration's proposed new austerity measures affecting the tuition waivers (Certification 98) and the possibility of a tuition increase. Through phone calls, text messages, emails, social networking sites, and word of mouth members of the student action committees spread the news to others to meet at two specific locations within the campus at 5:00 am. Once the two groups were formed, they coordinated via text messages to meet on the main road of the campus. To the astonishment of the initiators the number of people that showed up was three times more than expected and they were able to take over the campus from within by closing down its six gates. By using protest camps, physical barricades, and alternative media, such as the Internet, the students constructed spaces of resistance that initiated a lock-down of ten out of the eleven UPR campuses. Thus, on April 21, 2010, the students of the UPR officially announced the beginning of a strike that quickly broadened into a defense of an accessible public education of excellence as a fundamental right and not a privilege.

During the sixty-two days that the first wave of student protests and occupations lasted, traditional and alternative media covered the events until it ended with a mediated agreement between the Students' National Negotiating Committee (CNN) and the University's administration in a seeming victory for the students. However, in retaliation the government quickly increased the number of members of the Board of Trustees to gain the majority vote within the University's decision making. This effectively allowed the University's administration to breach the agreement, suspend students from the CNN by accusing them of leading and organizing the strike, and hastily impose an \$800 student fee active in January 2011 (to be \$400 per semester thereafter). For students at the UPR, this increase meant a more than 100% hike in tuition which would prevent about 10,000 students from continuing their studies for lack of economic resources and opportunities.[1] The administration's steadfast refusal to negotiate the

tuition increase initiated the second wave of student protests, which began on December 14, 2010. Prior to this, the administration had removed some of the university's main campus gates and welded others open in order to prevent students from controlling the campus again. The administration also requested the police force including: mounted police, snipers, K-9 unit, Riot police, and the SWAT team to occupy the university and enforce the gag law prohibiting student demonstrations on campus premises. The presence of the police force inside the UPR main campus violated the "non-confrontational agreement" that was established to promote peaceful dialogue after the violent incidents during the 1981 UPR student strike. As a result, students (re)constructed their spaces of resistance by using emotional narratives, organizing nonviolent civil disobedience acts at public places, fomenting lobbying groups, disseminating online petitions, and developing alternative proposals to the compulsory fee. The protests continued until March 2011, when it came to a halt after the traditional media overstressed a violent incident that involved physical harassment to the University's chancellor, Ana Guadalupe, during one of the student demonstrations.

[1] This estimate was calculated by the UPR administration, and was born out after the fee was imposed.

Scope and content

The University of Puerto Rico Student Movement Collection (2010-2011) documents through digital photographs and ephemera (30,061 KB) the student led strike to protest austerity and tuition measures announced by University of Puerto Rico administrators.

Notes

Title notes

Restrictions on access

Open for research

Conditions governing use

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Other notes

- **Publication status:** Published
- **Description identifier:** ArchonInternalCollectionID:1573

Series descriptions

Ref code	Title	Dates	Access status	Container
id374254	File - Analog printouts of the digital collection	2010--2011		1
id374255	File - Overview of the 2010-2011 University of Puerto Rico Student Movement			1 1
id374256	File - Flyers concerning a debt of 240 million dollars			1 2
id374257	File - Alessandra M Rosa CV			1 3
id374258	File - Group of similar publications by UPR			1 4
id374264	File - Notice to the members of the "Comite de Estudiantes de la Educacion Publica"	March 9, 2010		1 5
id374265	File - "Estipulacion"			1 6
id374266	File - Encuesta al Estudiantado			1 7
id374267	File - Images demonstrating unity between Puerto Rico's precincts			1 8
id374268	File - Flyers urging people to vote			1 9
id374269	File - "Ruta de la Marcha"	July 18		1 10
id374270	File - Radio Huelga			1 11
id374271	File - "Contagi-Arte"			1 12
id374276	File - Images critiquing police presence at UPR			1 13
id374277	File - Flyers for UPR-related events			1 14
id374278	File - Various images of the UPR Student Movement			1 15