

UNIVERSITY EXTENSION:

TRAINING, RETRAINING, INTRAINING, AND DETRAINING

By

Dr. Arturo Morales Carrión

President, University of Puerto Rico

April 27, 1975

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It is a great pleasure to welcome you to this distinguished institution. Your membership in that of the National University Extension Association. We are delighted that you are in San Juan at the site of the 60th Annual Conference of the National University Extension Association. The University of Puerto Rico is proud to be the host institution of this meeting.

Address of Dr. Arturo Morales Carrión, President, University of Puerto Rico, at the opening of the 60th Annual Conference of the National University Extension Association, Caribe Hilton Hotel, San Juan, April 27, 1975.

It is a great pleasure to welcome to Puerto Rico so distinguished and so vital a membership as that of the National University Extension Association. We are delighted that you chose San Juan as the site of this 60th annual conference and I can assure you that the University of Puerto Rico is proud to be the host institution of this meeting.

Although, like everybody else, we are going through an energy crisis, you will find here no shortage of solar energy. So I hope you will be able to get away from your crowded program and take to the beach for a truly Caribbean solar treatment. The water and the sun are awaiting you. Use them so that you can prove to your Board of

Regents that you were really here. If you need an exhibit, I'll send you a photo of our TUNA singing El Apagón.

As befits the National University Extension Association, you have chosen a most provocative theme for your Conference: The New Majority in Higher Education. I should like to share with you some thoughts on the vital issues you will be exploring, but before I get to the gist of the matter, I feel I should provide you with a thumbnail sketch of our public system of higher education so that you will know your host better.

When we talk today about the University of Puerto Rico, we are referring to a state institution of great complexity, spread throughout this Island. We have at present more than 52,000 students and some 3,200 professors. In enrollment, the University is close to Ohio State, which I understand, has 57,000. We belong to the growing species of multi-campus institutions, now spreading throughout the United States and other lands. We have three main campuses -- Río Piedras, Mayagüez and the Medical



Sciences, -- each headed by a Chancellor, six Regional Colleges - which are the equivalent of your Community Colleges - and a four-year college in the heart of Puerto Rico, the town of Cayey. As part of our educational effort in the agricultural sciences, we have a network of Experiment Stations and an Agricultural Extension Service. The Puerto Rico Nuclear Center, which is now linked with the new U. S. Energy Research and Development Administration, is also part of our scheme. And finally, we have a Botanical Garden where you may see some of the most beautiful and exotic orchids this side of heaven.

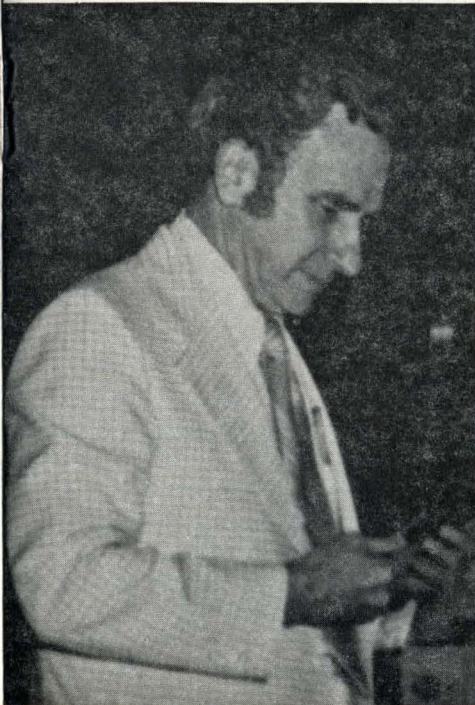
In referring to the University of Puerto Rico, then, I am referring to a human archipelago, which at times is hit by storms and heavy seas. As an institution we have known our hurricanes, but the foundations are strong, and the institution, in its great diversity, has shown good resilience to all kinds of bad weather.

Like everybody else, we have had our share of disruptions; and now, like everybody else, we focus our

immediate anxiety in the Office of the Treasurer. Sailing is never all joy for the skipper, who has to preside over so much diversity. There are difficult psychological fluctuations to deal with, but none so alarming at present as the budgetary fluctuations.

We are now gathering our forces for the annual Battle of the Budget, at a time when Puerto Rico has felt the financial crunch -- which means that the University more than ever has to look upon productivity and cost-effectiveness -- concepts never too popular in Academia. It is a time for re-evaluation and streamlining, a time to see how far the University has gone in its tremendous expansion of the 60's, to determine which are the basic goals it hopes to achieve in a rapidly changing society, and who will be its new clientele in coming years.

Like you in the United States, we are asking ourselves many questions as we navigate in so many conflicting currents. We are deeply committed here, not only to expanding and enhancing our academic offerings, but to an essential



ideal of service. The people of Puerto Rico have traditionally placed great faith in education. They have generously supported the public system, from the primary grades to our more sophisticated schools. For them, education has been the creed, the hope, the open sesame to government work, the professions, the social standing, the upward mobility.

Assisted by the rapid growth of private universities, which now represent approximately 44% of total enrollment, we have now in the accredited colleges and universities in this Island, according to figures recently gathered in my office, a total of nearly 97,000 students, certainly one of the highest proportions you can find in any corresponding area in the world. We are still a considerable way from full access of opportunity - and we are very much concerned with that issue, as well as with the problems of disadvantaged or deprived children. But there is no denying that a tremendous effort has been made in Puerto Rico to develop a comprehensive system of higher education and that the funds and

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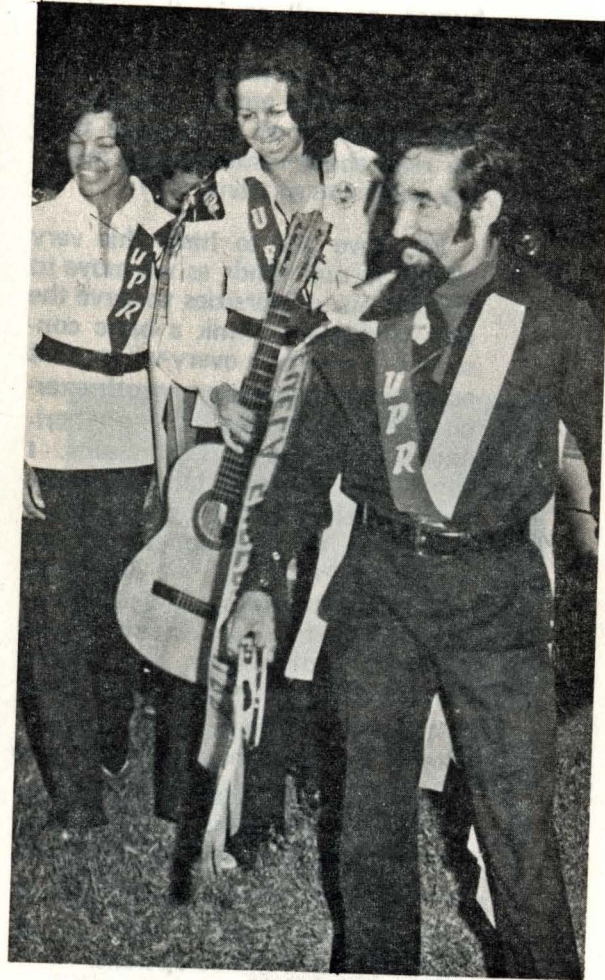
economic underpinnings have basically come from the pockets of our citizens and tax-payers. At the same time, in the public system we have preserved one of the lowest tuition scales in the whole gamut of state universities and land-grant colleges. Federal funds, particularly in the



areas of student assistance, the health sciences, social welfare and agriculture, are now playing a significant role and are certainly very much needed. But our University System, wide and complex, is really an educational bootstrap operation, helped here and there, at different periods, with fluctuating Federal funds. The basic, steady support of the public system, as well as the essential thrust of its action, has been Puerto Rican. That is why our University, like state institutions of its kind on the mainland, is committed

not only to the transmission and enrichment of knowledge but to service. Here in Puerto Rico that means service geared to the critical needs of our Commonwealth -- it is service to education and teacher training; it is service to health, social welfare and hospital work; it is service to public administration and planning; it is service to industry, agriculture and commerce; it is service to the preservation and enhancement of the cultural heritage. The demands upon the University System are heavy. People want the institution to be relevant to their lives, to do the job of teaching and training and to find solutions to problems through research. They want access and a career for their sons and daughters; but they also want the University to be a beacon of light.

Much is demanded of this University System as we move through stormy, perilous times. It's not simply that we have to reach the growing clientele of those who in their post-adolescent years want the experience of learning. It's also that the University, in many ways and in multiple fields, has to be re-



sponsive to a society living in an era of perplexity and self-doubt.

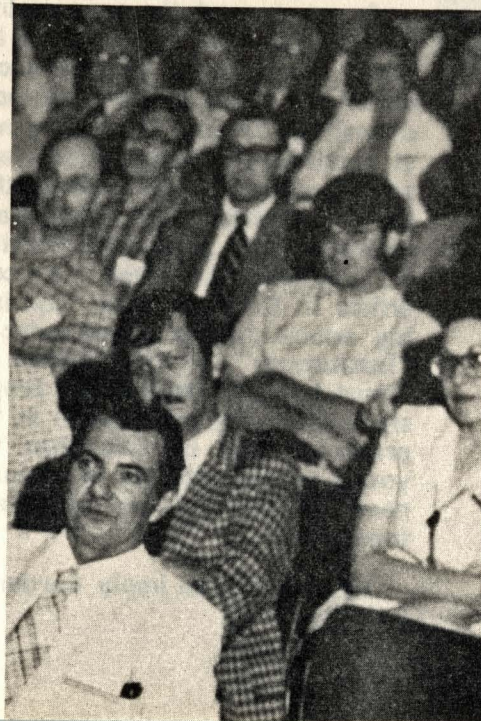
The burden is heavy, because we know that knowledge can not be improvised, that educational institutions are tradition-bound by their very nature, that change to be meaningful has to be carefully planned in the academic field, and that in education -- no matter the discipline -- it's quality that finally counts.

While the University has to respond to society -- these are no times for ivory towers! -- the University has to help in shaping society. In doing so, it has to be true to itself. We don't want the spread of knowledge to mean the spread of an ocean which is only an inch deep. If education in this complex world becomes too shallow, then we are really in deep waters as far as our true mission goes.

Knowledge, all true knowledge, is complex and difficult, and while clarity of thought might make it accessible, it can not reduce it to simple formulas and much less to slogans. This holds true in the

human as well as in the natural sciences and we are learning all too well how in our present world they are interacting among themselves. The explosion of knowledge that we read about cannot really mean the explosion of trivia.

We have got to have this very clearly in our minds as we move to expand our universities to serve the new clientele. I think a basic consensus is emerging every-where that education is not just a youth exercise, that it is really a lifelong experience, challenge and endeavor. I think a broad understanding is now being reached that in contemporary education we are concerned not only with training, but also with retraining, intraining, and even detraining. Let us give credit to the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education for coining the term "stop-out" to replace "drop-out." Some students may need to stop and detrain, to learn about life by the exertion of work, before climbing back on our train. Some might even want to change trains, and we should be prepared to have several schedules and diverse options.



But in reaching out to a new clientele or in reprogramming our university tasks, we cannot compromise with quality. We can think of a university without walls -- Socrates and Plato certainly invented one -- but even that University must have sound foundations; otherwise it will become a will-of-the-wisp. Universities must not let themselves be carried away by "cash and carry" operations. We are not in the business of selling information; we are in the business of expanding true knowledge and helping to cultivate talent and intelligence, inside and outside our University walls, with access not just to the young or deprived, but to all, regardless of age or profession.

We have at our command a revolutionary technology, which can greatly help us in our extramural endeavor. But the technology by itself will not create values; it can become -- as we have seen with television -- too readily the servant of sheer commercialism. Communications media by themselves can be massive in their growth and impact; to be great, they need great ends. University extension work in this

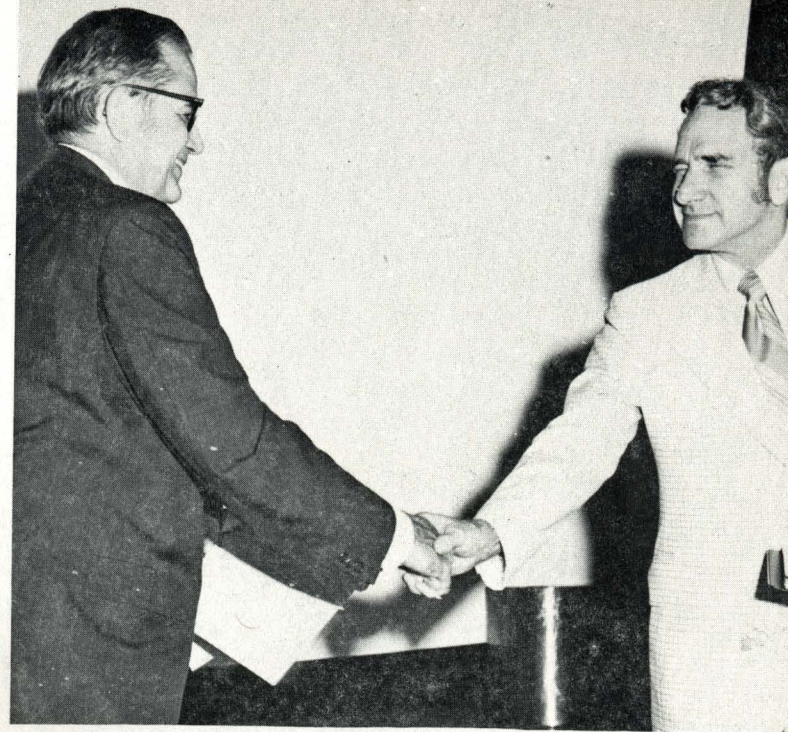
area has got to be just that: an extension of what the University is in its intellectual and scientific commitments. Into whichever field we go, we must carry the brand of quality, of rational intelligence, of critical analysis, of fairness to diverse opinion, of willingness to accept that ours is a world of trial and error, and also the willingness to take a firm position, when firmness of conviction is needed.

As we expand the span of life, our clientele will grow. As we become more aware of our social duties, our action will become more diversified. These, I think are general conditions of universities everywhere, particularly in societies that are committed to democratic values. I fully agree with Stephen R. Graubard, who stated in a recent article in *Daedalus*, that "continuing education" is a redundancy. "Institutions" -- he claimed -- "must be committed to the proposition that men and women in the prime of life, no less than the young or the old, are in constant need of learning and discussing together."

To discuss is to imply the demo-

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to share these thoughts with you and your team. I heard from you in London between my first and second trips. How I'll go back to the old times. As far as I am concerned, like most University people everywhere, I have to go back to the basics of the subject. I think that may carry the lesson and the light.

I wish you all good luck and good hunting - and pay for your technical writers.



cratic potential, at different levels of participation and representation. It can not be a succession of individual monologues, nor reduced to a mere dialogue with a computer. Learning is information, reflection and interaction. It is highly individual and it is highly social. It demands solitude and it demands communication with others.

Your task, therefore, is most challenging and thought-provoking, for you are really transmuting the university into a stronger instrument of growth and self-awareness for the whole society.



I am grateful to have had the opportunity to share these thoughts with you today. Once I heard President Lyndon Johnson say after a long speech, "Now I'll go back to the salt mines." As far as I am concerned, like most University Presidents everywhere, I have to go back to the Battle of the Budget, so that others may carry the beacon and the light.

I wish you all good luck and good hunting -- and pray for your reciprocal wishes.

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