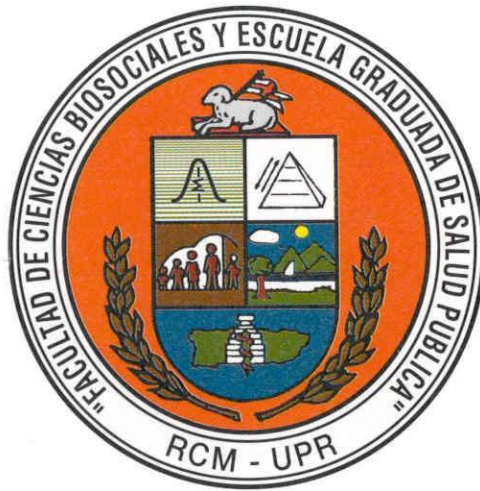


**UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO  
MEDICAL SCIENCES CAMPUS  
FACULTY OF BIOSOCIAL SCIENCES  
AND GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH**



# **GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030**

**Approved by the Administration and Teaching Committee in a meeting/workshop with the Strategic Planning Committee on June 11, 2025.**

**Approved on June 27, 2025 at a meeting of the Faculty of Biosocial Sciences and Graduate School of Public Health of the Medical Sciences Campus, according to Certification No. 10 2024-2025.**



## **STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS (in alphabetical order)**

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**Strategic Plan  
2025-2026 to 2029-2030**

**Introduction**

The Faculty of Biosocial Sciences and Graduate School of Public Health had its origins in the School of Tropical Medicine, which was founded in 1923 with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation and the sponsorship of Columbia University. The School of Tropical Medicine emerged as a center for research and postgraduate studies. In 1941, at the request of the Department of Health, the School of Tropical Medicine developed graduate courses in the field of public health.

On May 15, 1949, Public Law No. 378 authorized the creation of the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) School of Medicine. The School was organized and began operations in the fall of 1950. The Department of Preventive Medicine and Public Health was part of the School of Medicine from its inception, offering courses in preventive medicine and public health to medical students. In 1955, the Department of Preventive Medicine and Public Health was accredited as a School of Public Health. In 1956, it assumed the primary role of training the human resources necessary for the implementation of regionalized services and the estimation of the health needs of the community. Subsequently, the Academic Senate of the Medical Sciences Campus recommended the creation of the Graduate School of Public Health. On January 27, 1970, the Council of Higher Education authorized, through Certification Number 42, the creation of the Graduate School of Public Health of the Medical Sciences Campus of the University of Puerto Rico.

In 1981, academic offerings were reorganized and five departments were created to adequately reflect the mission of the School and its interdisciplinary character. These five departments are: Department of Health Services Administration, Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology, Department of Social Sciences, Department of Human Development, Department of Environmental Health. Currently, as part of the academic offerings of these departments, they offer master's degrees, doctoral degrees, and graduate certificates in various modalities of day and evening. The 1980s and 1990s were decades of growth and development of the School's programs in response to social needs and areas of concern in the field of public health. It was a period of development in the biosocial sciences, as evidenced by the creation of the Census Data Center, the Center for Sociomedical Research and Evaluation, the Center for Demographic Research, and the Institute for Developmental Disabilities.

The Graduate School of Public Health (GSPH) of the Medical Sciences Campus (MSC) of the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) has entered a new cycle of strategic planning for the period between 2025-2030. The last strategic plan prepared and approved by the faculty covered the period of 2017-2022 and was extended until the academic year 2024-2025 while waiting for the approval of the strategic plan of the UPR and the MSC. Despite its extension, the committee continued its work and ensured that the school's strategic plan is aligned with that of the UPR and the MSC.

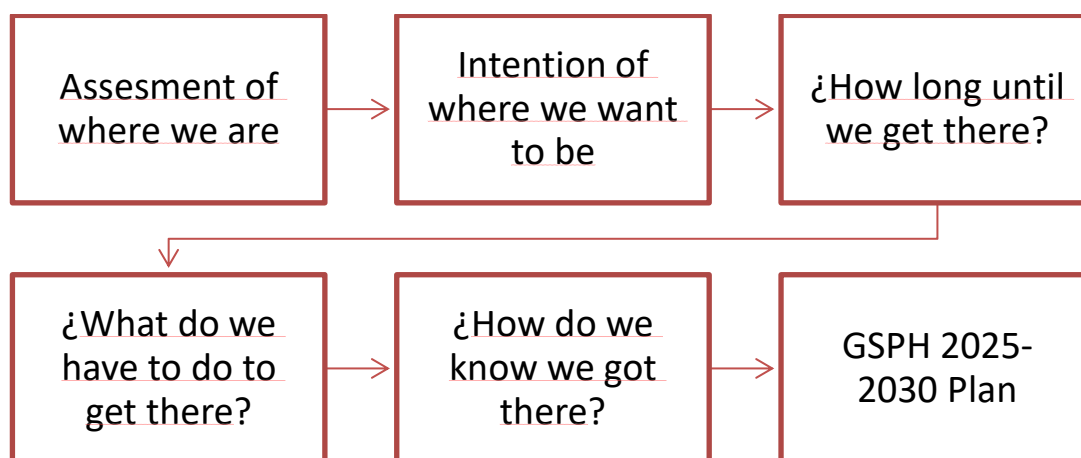
The strategic plan is a participatory institutional process, which constitutes a guide that presents the vision of the future of the School in its effort to remain positioned as the academic alternative of excellence for the study of public health. In this way, it seeks to identify and develop viable and evidence-based responses for organizations, communities and other collaborators that support health promotion and protection efforts.

The analytic perspective for the development of the Strategic Plan 2025-2030 was implemented with a systems thinking approach that includes knowledge of the initial conditions and their characteristics, where we are and future visualizations of

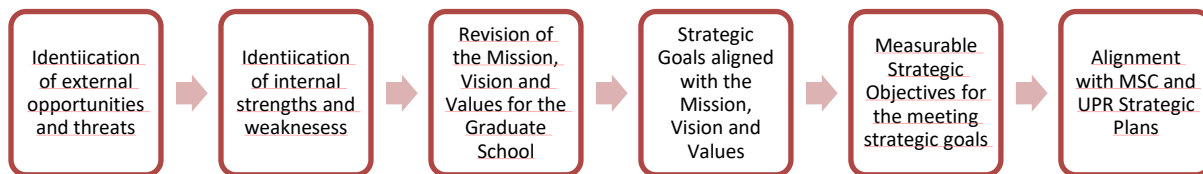
where we want to go, applying strategic management and the intentional actions of the academic community required to reach the established place. The Graduate School of Public Health as a subsystem of the Medical Sciences Campus is characterized by its unique complexity where internally there is interaction between faculty, students and non-teaching staff. In turn, there is interaction with other components of the Medical Sciences Campus, as well as with the community in general. This Strategic Plan 2025-2030 considers the entire network of components with an articulated focus on the near future in a changing environment, anchoring us, not only in the challenges, but also in our strengths.

## Methodology

To carry out the analysis of the critical issues that the Strategic Plan 2025-2030 must address, the Strategic Planning Committee (COPE by is Spanish acronym) carried out a process of searching for information based on various methodologies for collecting information, representing various sectors of the School. These methodologies included document review, surveys, interviews, and focus groups. The Planning, Appraisal and Continuous Improvement Model was used:



As represented in the figure below, the development of the strategic plan was carried out in six (6) phases, namely:



The information gathering process was based on a SWOT analysis of the School, so the following areas were worked on in the various data collection methodologies: strengths of the School and its various components (academic, research and services), current challenges/weaknesses that the School faces, and opportunities and threats. Part of the process also included a review of the School's mission, vision and values, as embodied in the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan. The analysis used important documents of the School, such as: the 2021 accreditation self-study report, the evaluation report of the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan, as well as the accreditation criteria of the *Council on Education for Public Health* (CEPH). After this process of information gathering and discussion, an analysis of the strengths and identified critical issues to be addressed in the Strategic Plan was carried out, with a focus on fulfilling the mission and vision of the School. To facilitate the process of analysis and discussion of the information, a template was developed for the use of the members of the committee.

As part of its work plan, COPE identified the stake-holders that should participate in the consultation process and requested a list of names to the academic departments, through communication from the dean, for invitation into our information gathering activities. The groups consulted were: students, non-teaching staff, faculty members, alumni, the School's External Advisory Board<sup>1</sup>, and a group of

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<sup>1</sup> The *Council on Education for Public Health* (CEPH), as the school's accrediting agency, requires in its accreditation criterion *F1: Community Involvement in School or Program Evaluation and Assessment* a formal structure to receive community input from alumni, employers, and



*stakeholders* among which are: practice supervisors/preceptors, collaborators and beneficiaries of research and service projects, and alumni employers, among others. COPE members participated as facilitators in the consultation process.

## **Strengths and Critical Issues**

The sectors that participated in the consultation process expressed the strengths of the school. Among these the following stand out: being the only accredited school of public health in Puerto Rico, Alumni in leadership positions, the diversity of expertise of its faculty, the commitment of its staff to excellence, the relationship with the community and organizations, its participation in public policy analysis processes, and its culture of solidarity. Other strengths identified are:

- Unique and necessary programs in the community.
- Quality and diversity of the academic offering.
- School community is committed to teamwork.
- Quality of graduates.
- Students are committed and passionate about public health.
- Quality and diversity of professional expertise of the faculty.
- Resilience of faculty and university community.
- Faculty participation in institutional service leadership positions.
- Faculty participation in community governance structures and community advisory boards.
- Participation of the school in the processes of public policy analysis/advocacy.
- Commitment to consulting.
- Development of research with emphasis on vulnerable groups.
- Alliances with different sectors of the country.

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representatives of professional and community organizations in the field of public health. To respond to this criterion, the External Advisory Board of the Graduate School of Public Health was created. Criterion F1 also requires the School to involve the external community in the development of the School's vision, mission, values, goals, and evaluation measures.

- Strong relationships with the community in service activities, internships and internships.
- Links with other universities and international organizations.

Critical issues were identified by area based on SWOT results, namely:

<b>Teaching</b> Recruitment and Retention School Visibility Accessibility of Academic Offerings Student Experience & Services Prepared Faculty Updated Curriculum Practice Activities in Curriculum Relevant short offerings Student Diversity	<b>Services</b> Professional Development Community Services Public Policy and Advocacy Administrative Support Visibility and Presence of the EGSP
<b>Research</b> Subsidized Research Non-subsidized Research Research/Evaluation as Services Administrative/Technical Support Dissemination	<b>Resources</b> Technological Fiscal Human resources Physical Resources

Measurable strategic goals and objectives were developed aligned with the strategic plans of the MSC and the UPR. In addition, the Dean's Office developed the evaluation plan for the process of appraisal and monitoring of the achievement of the goals and objectives of the School's Strategic Plan. Below, we present the strategic plan developed and approved by the faculty.

## **Strategic Plan**

### **Mission**

To advance public health through the development of leaders, the creation of new knowledge, and the provision of services that contribute to community strengthening and the well-being and sustainable development of society.

### **Vision**

To be a leading institution in public health and health promotion for the comprehensive well-being and social development of communities and populations.

### **Values**

The GSPH is guided by the universal human values of Social Justice and Equity.

We are committed to the following core values:

- Defense of health as an inalienable right of every human being.
- Respect for the dignity, diversity and integrity of the human being.
- Solidarity and sensitivity with communities and populations experiencing vulnerability.
- Responsibility, honesty, and professionalism in our social and academic endeavors.
- Commitment to interdisciplinary and interprofessional work.
- Commitment to continuous improvement and lifelong learning.
- Commitment to the socio-cultural values of the Puerto Rican nation.

## Goals and Objectives

### **Goal # 1-Teaching:**

**Strengthen the competency-based public health academic offerings so that they are accessible, promote student success, reflect community diversity, and respond to the health needs and challenges in Puerto Rico.**

1.1 Expand academic offerings through the use of virtual learning environments.

1.2 Implement projects that support student recruitment and success considering the diversity and needs of the student body.

1.3 Optimize graduation rates of GSPH academic programs.

1.4 Implement an integrated institutional and student assessment system for effective decision-making.

1.5 Facilitate faculty development in teaching and in their professional area.

1.6 Implement a plan for the dissemination of creative work and community outreach initiatives carried out by faculty and students.

### **Goal #2 Research:**

**Contribute to the generation of public health knowledge that addresses the needs of the population in Puerto Rico.**

2.1 Increase research initiatives developed by faculty or students.

2.2 Increase the number of faculty members who dedicate time to research as part of their academic load.

2.3 Increase the number of faculty and students who disseminate research results.

2.4 Increase the proportion of faculty members who serve on editorial boards, research advisory committees, or serve as reviewers of articles in peer-reviewed journals.

**Goal #3 Service:**

**Expand the GSPH's presence in Puerto Rico's public agenda on health matters through health promotion strategies, professional development, and direct services.**

3.1 Facilitate the participation of professionals in workshops, courses, and conferences offered by the GSPH.

3.2 Maintain the number of collaboration agreements with institutions and organizations for the professional development of health sector workers.

3.3 Maintain annual community service initiatives focused on priority public health areas.

3.4 Increase consulting and technical assistance to public agencies, private organizations, community-based organizations, and other sectors to enhance public health services, with particular attention to vulnerable populations.

3.5 Organize health policy promotion and advocacy activities.

3.6 Coordinate events and activities related to public health that increase the GSPH's visibility.

**Goal #4 Resources:**

**Optimize human, fiscal, physical, and technological resources for the fulfillment of GSPH's mission.**

4.1 Develop an administrative support model that facilitates the search for and management of research, training, and service projects.

4.2 Implement a service model for the Division of Continuing Education and Professional Studies (DCEPE) that incorporates diverse continuing education delivery modalities, technological resources, departmental integration, and management mechanisms.

4.3 Facilitate faculty access to innovative technological resources to support teaching in virtual environments and in the classroom.

4.4 Strengthen the necessary resources to implement the assessment systems, curricular and evaluation processes required by the institution and accrediting agencies.

4.5 Arrange for the availability of technological support, instructional design, and graphic arts services to assist faculty in the teaching process.

4.6 Strengthen resources for GSPH promotion and student recruitment.

4.7 Implement a professional development plan for non-teaching staff.

4.8 Foster the well-being and comprehensive health of the EGSP community (Faculty, Students, and Non-Teaching Staff).