

# **University Social Responsibility: A social transformation of learning, teaching, research, and innovation**

*“Your motives as well as your deeds must be honest.”*

*Lou Marinoff (2004)*

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## **Abstract**

Today, the practice of social responsibility has not only gained importance and recognition in the corporate world, but also in the academic setting. Higher educational institutions, as centers of knowledge, are also good corporate citizens that worry about the impacts that cause their operations to different groups of stakeholders. In Latin America and Spain, the practice of University Social Responsibility (USR) or “*Responsabilidad Social Universitaria*” (RSU) has developed greatly in the last decade. USR differs from Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), because it takes into account specific impacts related to higher educational institutions. These impacts are classified as organizational (related to work climate and environment), educational (academic foundation), cognitive (epistemological research) and social (outreach). However, in order to evaluate how an institution is behaving well or bad in socially responsible terms, there are 4 steps that universities should bear in mind: Commitment (of the president, deans and directors), self-diagnosis (performed by internal publics-students, staff, faculty, or external publics-local communities, suppliers, governments, other academic institutions, and alumni), fulfillment (determine strengths, weakness, critical points and suggestions of the self-diagnosis), and reporting (communication and compliance). These four steps for evaluating University Social Responsibility practices propose a continuous improvement and a self- reflection of daily operations of higher educational institutions (Vallaey, De la Cruz & Sasia, 2009).

This pilot study presents a self-diagnosis of internal public perceptions (students, professors and staff) regarding University Social Responsibility practices at University of Puerto Rico Rio Piedras Campus in Puerto Rico (based on the methodology of Vallaeys, et al., 2009).

**Keywords:** university social responsibility, stakeholders, social responsibility, impacts, public perceptions.

## **Introduction**

When receiving the honorary title of Doctor *Honoris Causa* from his alma mater, the National University of San Marcos in Peru, Mario Vargas Llosa (2001) stated:

The role of a university is not, cannot only be to forge good professionals, much less in a country such as ours, with unresolved civilization and modernity problems. It is equally important for a university to contribute to the forging of good citizens, men and women mindful of the society they live in, who aware of its deficiencies, challenges, injustices, and abysmal disparities, who are morally and civically responsible, who are aware that they must do something from their vocational and professional fields (p. 1).

These challenges exposed by Vargas Llosa (2001) lead us to the words of Thomas Moore (1994) in *Care of the Soul*, to the revival of the doctrine of *anima mundi*, which is essential to this academic undertaking. It means being aware of and feeling linked to and responsible for the world, for things, and for human beings.

Megino (2012) observed that Aristotle believed that “by caring for one another and a mutual desire to adopt legislation that ensures just coexistence and develops virtue, social good produces good and just citizens” (p.221). This is the inescapable responsibility of social responsibility. The virtues emphasized by Cisero (as cited in Brenes, 2012), knowledge, justice, strength, and temperance, are all present in a socially responsible university.

In a responsible university, conjecture (doxa) and absolute knowledge (episteme) require that all available data be rigorously examined in good faith. A responsible university fosters social behaviors with indicators aimed at developing a Putman (as cited in Kliksberg, 2004) that includes:

1. Ethical values (Amartrya Sen, 2008 saw them as a productive resources)
2. The ability to associate
3. Trust among its members
4. A civic conscience
5. Cooperation

Solidarity, transparency, civic-mindedness, a culture that teaches peaceful coexistence, to eradicate what Stiglitz (1998) called epistemological arrogance, all requires a university that teaches an economic model “with a human face”. According to Sen (2008), “ethical codes of businessmen and professionals” are the productive human resources of a country, therefore universities must foster said ethical codes among its student body. A socially responsible university cannot exist if its members do not agree on its purpose. Thus, a socially responsible university responds to transversal curricular ethics (teaching staff, non-teaching staff, and students).

Due to the financial crisis in our society, universities should re-think and re-define their organizational processes from a socially responsible perspective. It is well-known that a high-quality education is the key step to impulse the economy and to improve the quality of life. Our investigation presents a pilot study of a self-diagnosis study of internal public perceptions (students, professors and staff) regarding USR at University of Puerto Rico Rio Piedras Campus in Puerto Rico (based on the methodology of Vallaeys, et al., 2009). Survey and focus groups are use it to evaluate internal public perceptions. A total of 971 people are being surveyed while 30 people will participate in focus groups.

## **Literature Review**

### **Corporate Social Responsibility**

The practice of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has achieved more prominence and acceptance today than ever before. Multiple discussions, debates, theories, studies, and research have been taken place not only in the corporate world but also in the academic setting. However many different actors (researchers, consultants, companies, and practitioners) have failed to find an exact definition or to agree about what corporate social responsibility really means (Crowther & Aras, 2008; Dahlsrud, 2008; Garriga & Melé, 2004). In fact, there are numerous definitions about CSR that can vary from country to country (Dahlsrud, 2008).

Corporate Social Responsibility can be defined as how companies manage everyday operations in a responsible way, taking into account the impacts of their operations in the economy, society, and environment, and of course with their different groups of stakeholders. Stakeholders are “*any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the firm’s objectives*” (Freeman, 1984, p. 16). They can include internal publics (employees, suppliers, etc) or external (journalists, customers, governments, local communities, etc). Corporate Social Responsibility usually describes the relationship between business and the larger society (Porter & Krammer, 2006), and the interrelationship between economic, environmental, and social aspects (Ihlen, 2008). CSR is a voluntary approach of doing business; companies engage in CSR because they see a benefit or are morally attached to them or they are responsibility for the impacts they have in the society and environment (Cohen, 2010).

The Commission of the European Communities (2001) proposes that CSR is “*a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis*” (p4). The

World Business Council for Sustainable Development developed a more proactive/multi-stakeholder definition of CSR. They conceived CSR as a reflection of a continuous multi-stakeholder commitment, because not only takes into account the quality of life of the workforce (employees) but also their families and as well local communities and society at large, while contributing to economic development (Moir, 2001).

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) also defined CSR through the agreement of a working group of multistakeholders in different countries around the world. In 2011, ISO presented and published the ISO 26000 in Social Responsibility, a practical framework for any kind of organization regarding social responsibility practices. One of the first tasks of the working groups was to develop an agreement definition of social responsibility:

Responsibility of an organization for the impacts of its decisions on society and the environment, through transparent and ethical behavior that: contributes to sustainable development, including health and the welfare of society; takes into account the expectations of stakeholders; is in compliance with applicable law and consistent with international norms of behavior; is integrated through the organization in its relationships (Borealis, 2011 citing ISO 2010, clause 2.18, p.3).

Key attributes of CSR can include good governance, managing social and environmental impacts, dialogue and communication with key stakeholders, and partnerships with other organizations for reaching sustainable development (Vallaes et al., 2009). There are many benefits (direct and indirect) that bring with the practice of CSR. One of these benefits is the improvement of relations with stakeholders and the recruitment of potential candidates that are eager to work for responsible companies, bringing positive and attitude behaviors among different groups of stakeholders (Castelo Branco & Rodrigues Lima, 2006; Hartman, Subin, & Dhanda, 2007). Other benefits are risk reduction, better corporate image, competitive

advantage, market reputation, and long-time strategic interests (Hartman et al., 2007; Carroll & Shabana, 2010)

CSR practices have become a key topic in the everyday agenda of organizations around the world. Companies have started to operate in a more responsible way, promoting social and environmental actions. However companies should be aware that only promote CSR practices is not enough, they must communicate CSR internally and externally in an effective way to all groups of stakeholders (Basil & Erlandson, 2008; Isenmann, 2006). Therefore, those organizations that promote social and environmental initiatives have the power to evoke positive reactions among different groups of stakeholders (Morsing & Schultz, 2006). CSR communication could be understood as a transmission of information regarding economic, social, and environmental initiatives. It must be relevant and interesting so it can generate an exchange of ideas that can cause opinions, collaborations, and also changes in behaviors and attitudes among organizations and stakeholders.

The practice of CSR suggest that companies should identify those key groups of stakeholders and incorporate their needs and values to the company's decision strategic process (Hartman, Rubin, & Dhanda, 2007; Crowther & Aras, 2008). For that reason, it is important that companies should know what kind of actions they are doing that could impact negatively economic, social, and environmental aspects.

The practice of CSR and its implications cannot be applied to higher educational institutions. University Social Responsibility distances from CSR because it takes into account specific impacts that companies do not know (Vallaey's et al., 2009). For instance, educational and cognitive impacts help in the solution of pedagogical and epistemological problems that only concerns universities not companies (Vallaey's et al., 2009). Therefore, corporations and universities have a different approach to social responsibility (both in theory and practice)

## **University Social Responsibility (USR): definitions and importance**

Social Responsibility practices are important in everyday management of higher educational institutions. Some studies have agreed in the importance of social responsibility (theory and practice) in different scenarios around the world:

Matten and Moon (2004) found that that many professors and practitioners believe that social responsibility should be fully integrated into the curriculum for helping students to make social and environmental decisions as businesspersons. In addition, Christensen, Peirce, Hartman, Hoffman, and Carrier (2007) reported that deans and directors of the top 50 global MBA programs positively viewed the inclusion and coverage of ethics, CSR, and sustainability courses in the curriculum.

Wright (2010) showed that presidents in Canadian universities were not very familiar with the concept of sustainable university. Wright (2010) also encountered that two of the challenges in the path of a responsible/sustainable university were financial predicaments and lack of understanding and awareness amongst university population (students, professors, staff, alumni, etc.) Pollock, Horn, Costanza, and Sayre (2009) also found other obstacles in the practice of sustainability and social responsibility, such as ineffective governance, traditional disciplinary boundaries, and the lack of a shared sustainable vision.

Nejati, Salamzadeh, and Sharafi (2010) found that world top universities (Harvard University, University of Cambridge, Yale University, University College London, Imperial College London, University of Oxford, University of Chicago, Princeton University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and California Institute of Technology) promote environmental initiatives to minimize impacts (e.g. reduction of greenhouse gas emissions). Another study found the presence of important CSR core areas (e.g. organizational governance, human rights, labor practices, the environment, fair operating practices,

consumer issues, and community involvement and development) in the websites of top 10 world universities (Nejati, Shafaei, Salamzadeh & Daraei, 2011).

Higher educational institutions are a key influencer for promoting social responsibility and sustainable development among future professionals. The practice of university social responsibility represents a renovated commitment with their different publics, aligning USR with the everyday management of institutional processes (Bacigalupo, 2008). USR focus in a mutual beneficial relationship between universities members and external stakeholders. University members (e.g. professors, staff, and students) are part of a responsible learning process that takes into account the involvement of external stakeholders (e.g. local communities, government, and alumni). In other words, curriculum, teaching, learning, and research are improved thanks to external stakeholders' feedback.

The practice of USR was born in Chile in 2001 through joint efforts of 13 universities with the initiative *Construye País* (Vallaey, 2007). These 13 universities created a network with the purpose of expanding the concept and the practice of USR among Chilean universities. Since the last decade, students, professors, staff, community members, and other external actors have performed studied, reflected, discussed, and detected challenges that Chilean universities have faced regarding social responsibility, establishing principles and reasons that inspire Latin American universities to adopt USR practices (Universidad Construye País, 2004). In 2010 it was also created the initiative *Ética, Capital Social y Desarrollo* (*Ethics, Social Capital, and Development*) by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). After that, several universities in Latin America have understood the importance of USR, and have started working with other universities in order to create partnerships (Vallaey, 2007). In addition, many other efforts have appeared in the last years: virtual dialogues of USR among universities, a virtual course for professors (by the Organization of American States), a competition for getting advising in the creation of USR initiatives (13



universities advised in 4 countries in 2006), a multimedia CD of USR (2006), an observatory of USR among several universities in Colombia (in 2007), an observatory of USR among online institutions, and a guide on how to implement USR (published by the IDB in 2008). This manual written by Vallaeys et al. (2009) has become a useful framework for understanding and implementing the practice of USR.

Vallaeys et al. (2009) have developed one the most accepted definitions of USR so far. They defined USR as the ability to disseminate and employ a set of principles and values through four processes: Responsible campus, social knowledge management, professional and civic education, and social participation. In other words, USR encloses to what universities are responsible for, to whom they are responsible, and how they are responsible (González Alcántara, Fontaneda González, Camino López & Antón Lara, 2010).

Any type of organization (corporations, NGOs, universities, government) can cause specific impacts due to everyday operations and management. Sometimes organizations produce negative impacts without realizing it. Universities have impacts on the economy, society, and environment due to a high number of people and vehicles around campus, high consumption of materials, and development of complex activities, among other causes.

Vallaeys et al. (2009) states four university impacts:

- **Organizational Impacts:** As with any organization, universities have also impacts on the life of internal publics (staff, professors, and students), and specific impacts on the environment regarding how campus operations are performed (waste, deforestation, transportation, contamination, etc.). Universities must ask themselves how they are fulfilling everyday operations around campus.
- **Educational Impacts:** It involves teaching-learning processes and the development of the curriculum. Universities must ask themselves what kind of professionals are

educating and how they can restructure teaching and training in order to educate responsible citizens.

- **Cognitive Impacts:** It encloses all related to epistemological and ethical orientations, theoretical approaches, research, and production and diffusion of knowledge. Here universities must ask themselves how generate and manage knowledge.
- **Social Impacts:** As with also any organization, universities should participate in the development of local communities and social capital. Universities have a clear impact on the economic, social, and political development of society.

In order to minimize these impacts and become a better responsible and sustainable university, Vallaeys et al. (2009) suggest four steps for implementing USR practices:

### **Implementation of University Social Responsibility practices**

#### **Commitment**

It refers to the engagement and empowerment of different members of the university community in the USR practice. The practice of USR cannot happen in isolation (by a specific group of people, e.g. USR staff); the practice of USR must be articulated with the institutional mission. However, it is needed the creation of a team in charge of planning, developing, promoting, and evaluating social responsible practices, but all members of the university community should be committed.

USR is an institutional policy that manages internal and external impacts. Therefore the practice of USR has to promote participative dialogue with diverse groups of stakeholders (internal and external) that could be affected due to these impacts.

#### **Self-Diagnosis**

In this step, universities perform a self-diagnosis of USR in order to know how they are in social responsible terms (strengths, weaknesses, and areas of improvement). Universities analyze themselves to determine the level of social responsibility. This self-diagnosis is

participatory and it is performed by different members of the university community, such as internal (staff, professors, and students) and external (members of local communities, government offices, alumni, suppliers, among others).

The self-diagnosis is performed through different research methods such as surveys, focus groups and interviews. All questions are a reflection of a learning process and continuous improvement. The topics of the self-diagnosis (e.g. focus groups, surveys or interviews) are focused on the four key areas mentioned earlier (responsible campus, professional and civic education, social knowledge management, and social participation).

### **Fulfillment**

This step consists in informing and communicating the results of the self-diagnosis to all the groups (internal and external) that participated. For every core area, all the data can be summarized in four areas: strengths, weakness, critical points, and demands/suggestions. It should include a summary of the main results, the selection of the areas chosen for improvement, and the different projects selected, and the reasons why they were chosen. It can be presented through informal talks, meetings, reports, brochures, power point presentations, etc. The purpose of this step is to empower members of the university community in the development of social responsible projects.

After selecting areas for improvement (through the development of projects), universities should create an institutional plan to fulfill these commits. Certain initiatives could end in a short period of time, but others could need an annual planning and evaluation. Hence, universities should commit in the practice of USR in a long term and not only in some periods of time (e.g. with a change of university government).

### **Reporting and Communication**

Reporting is a key element in a social responsible process. A credible and useful report regarding USR practices should include:

- Summary of the results of the self-diagnosis
- Actions developed
- Results obtained
- Recommendations and future work

This report can be annual or biannual and it can be print out or placed on the university website as a PDF file or in an interactive way in an accessible link on the university homepage.

Each single one of these steps is necessary to diagnosis, develop, evaluate, and communicate socially responsible practices in universities. It is important to perform these steps every two-three years (self-diagnosis, fulfillment, and reporting/communication). According to Vallaeys et al. (2009), the reason behind in starting over each certain time is that social responsibility is a permanent process of continuous improvement, and it is also an institutional self-reflection of everyday life in campus. If universities only perform diagnosis once, it is risky that old routine habits can come and the dynamics of self-learning can be forgotten.

## **Methodology**

From a multidisciplinary perspective our purpose is to describe and analyze the state of art of Social Responsibility at the University of Puerto Rico Rio Piedras Campus. This research performs a self-diagnosis of internal public perceptions. We want to know the degree of University Social Responsibility (USR) from the different perspectives of internal stakeholders (faculty, staff, and students). We approach to the discussion of the topic following the four impacts of a university environment: organizational, educational, social and cognitive. This study presents a descriptive-analytical nature with a methodological design composed by the articulation of three research instruments: questionnaires and focus

groups. However, because this is an ongoing investigation, we will present only preliminary results based on the questionnaires (only students).

The questionnaires and the focus groups are based on the methodology proposed by Vallaeys et al., (2009). It is expected that this study will involve about 1000 volunteers' members of the university community.

a. Questionnaires: For our first measuring instrument we are using questionnaires, one for each group of internal stakeholders. Each questionnaire includes indicators to measure performance of USR practices to get quantifiable data that let us know where each one stands. The number of participants is determined according to Krejcie & Morgan (1970). According to this measurement we set 971 questionnaires with the following distribution: Faculty N=274, Staff N=320, and Students N= 377. Up-to-date we have 370 students surveyed of a total of 377. We expect individuals representing each faculty or department. The questions are related to responsible campus, professional and civic education, social knowledge management, and social participation. Not all the groups have to answer questions related to all of these core areas (e.g., students' questionnaire includes questions related to only three areas: responsible campus, professional and civic education, and social participation). The questionnaires are anonymous and the participation is voluntary. The participants are randomly selected. The questionnaire presents a Likert-type scale format with six options defined as follows: 1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: somewhat disagree, 4: somewhat agree, 5: agree and 6: totally agree. The purpose of using data collected in surveys and focus groups is to identify the strengths of the institution regarding USR and which areas should be improved.

b. Focus Groups: Three focus groups will be held during summer 2013, one for each group of internal stakeholders. We expect diversity of individuals in terms of school or department, as well as gender (6 individuals maximum per group). This instrument will allow

us to collect qualitative data. The guiding questions from these focus groups also revolve around general issues and the four core areas (responsible campus, professional and civic education, social knowledge management, and social participation) to identify the strengths of the institution regarding the USR and which areas should be improved. This research instrument allows us to perceive institutional resistance as well as be a source of creative ideas and innovative solutions to the problems of everyday life in the campus.

### **Preliminary results**

Some preliminary results from this ongoing investigation are presented in this section.

Surveys and focus groups (of students, staff, and professors) are used to analyze and evaluate internal social responsibility practices at University of Puerto Rico Rio Piedras Campus. The University of Puerto Rico (UPR) system is a public university with 11 campuses around the island. The University of Puerto Rico Rio Piedras (UPR-RP) is the leading public research university of the UPR system located in the capital of San Juan. UPR-RP has approximately 15,000 students (both undergraduate and graduate students), which around 3000 are graduate students.

Students are the first groups being surveyed, we have so far 317 students surveyed for a total of 377. In this paper we will disclose students' perceptions around university social responsibility. The student's questionnaire consists of 42 Likert scale questions (strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat disagree, somewhat agree, agree, and strongly agree).

The student's questionnaire is divided in three main areas: Responsible campus, Professional and Civic Education, and Social Participation. Responsible campus as stated before refers to actions that the university is doing on student life, environment (recycling, waste, energy, water, etc) internal communication, and work environment. Twenty-two questions were developed in this questionnaire that asks students how UPR-RP is behaving in these aspects.

Professional and Civic Participation enclose the opinions and perceptions of students regarding how the university is preparing and educating students for the challenges of tomorrow. Ten questions are presented in the questionnaire related to professional and civic participation. The last key area in the survey is Social Participation (10 questions) that describes the role that university presents in local communities and society at large and how is involving and engaging university members with external actors.

The Likert type questions were coded as follows: strongly disagree: 1; disagree: 2; somewhat disagree: 3; somewhat agree: 4; agree: 5; and strongly agree 5.

Results shown that the average year of studies of the students surveyed was the 4<sup>th</sup> year of undergraduate studies. In addition, the average age was between 20-25 years and most of the students were women. Students were selected from all departments and schools of the university. Table 1 shows the name of the schools, the amount of students surveyed, and the average response of all three areas:

**Table 1. Average response of all three areas by student's major**

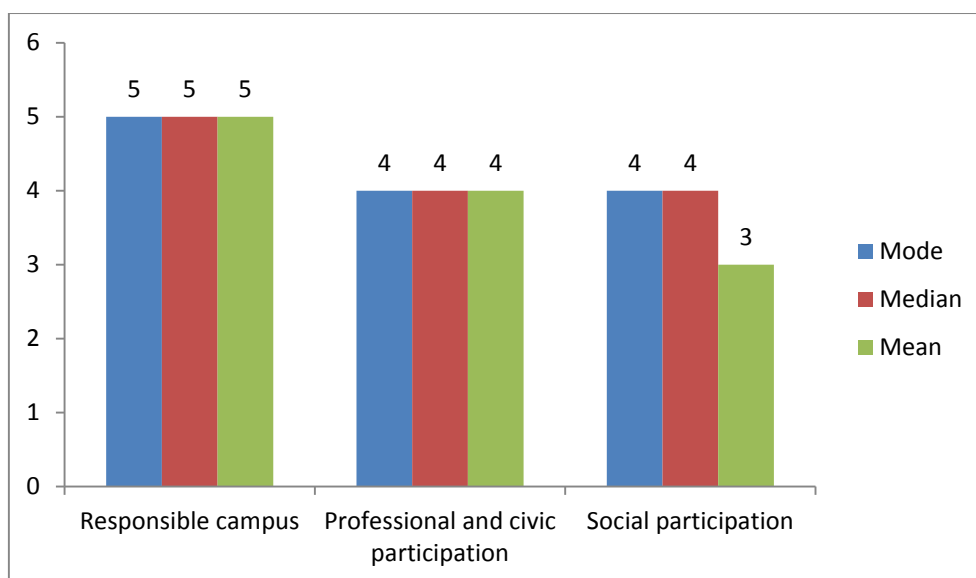
<b>School or Department</b>	<b>Number of students surveyed</b>	<b>Average response</b>
Business	60	Somewhat agree (4)
Architecture	11	Somewhat agree (4)
Science	87	Somewhat agree (4)
Social Sciences	62	Somewhat agree (4)
Communication	5	Somewhat agree (4)
Law	19	Somewhat disagree (3)
Education	44	Somewhat agree (4)
Humanities	29	Somewhat agree (4)

School of Science includes degrees in Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Math. Social Sciences include degrees in Anthropology, Political Sciences, Economy, Geography, Psychology, Sociology, and Social Work. Humanities include studies in Philosophy, Hispanic Studies, French studies, English, History, Literature, Music, Theater and Arts. The sample of students in each school or department was selected according to the total of students enrolled in the academic year 2012-2013 in every school or department, and the total sample of students (377). As shown in Table 1 the average response by school/department in all three areas of the questionnaire (responsible campus, professional and civic participation, and social participation) was 4. In other words, most of the students surveyed indicated that they somewhat agree that the university is doing responsible efforts and initiatives in the key core areas. Law students were somewhat in disagreeing that the university is not doing responsible practices.

From the results, 20 students from the total sample pointed out that they did not know or were not sure what to response in a particular questions. Twelve of them were from Business, 6 from Social Sciences, and 2 from Science. It is interesting to note that most of these students were from Business majors where social responsibility and sustainability courses are usually taught and discussed.

Figure 1 shows the mode, median, and mean of the total sum of every core area of all schools/departments. Students agree that UPR-RP is a responsible campus that cares for the environment, presents a fair work environment and student life, and the way communication internal affairs are presented are also fair.





**Figure 1. Mode, Media and Mean by core area**

Professional and civic participation indicates that students somewhat agree that UPR-RP is educating students in a responsible way, but more improvements are needed for preparing future professionals and leaders. On the other hand, on average students pointed out that they are somewhat in disagree that UPR-RP is doing a good job with local communities, promoting partnerships and encouraging faculty to do more collaborative that involves communities for resolving local problems and necessities.

Overall, students somewhat agree that UPR-RP is a responsible campus that educates in a responsible way professionals and citizens, and promotes social participation. This means that more planning, commitment, engagement, and reporting are needed in these three core areas in order to become a truly responsible higher education institution.

### **Discussion and conclusions**

This pilot study has shown the internal perceptions of students at University of Puerto Rico Rio Piedras Campus towards University Social Responsibility efforts and initiatives. Results indicated that USR practices developed and promoted by the leading public university in Puerto Rico are perceived by students as fairly. Students somewhat agree that the university is behaving well in social responsibility terms. After this investigation is

completed (December 2013) it would be interesting to compare the different opinions of professors, staff, and students regarding USR and see if there any differences or similarities.

Self-reflection, which served as the inspiration for this study, is based on an analysis of responsibility and, above all, the part it plays in the chronic problems of society, no longer a peace and rationality compass amid the storm. The main concern is if our university in its daily operations forms student citizens that are alike and responsible; who love democracy and who can become leaders in the development of their country, or rather egocentric professionals, fragmented, used to hierarchical relations, and who understand life in terms of a struggle for power, rule, and authoritarianism.

Lesler Brown (2003) maintains that there is a vast gap between the rich and the poor:

1. There are more than 115 million people between the ages of 6 and 12 that do not attend school
2. There are 875 million illiterate people
3. The World Bank Institute adds that more than one billion dollars are paid as bribes, excluding misappropriation of public funds or theft of public goods (p.264).

This indicates that a country that fights corruption and improves laws increases its income by up to four times and decreases infant mortality rates by up to 75%. As a result, universities must, if they want to be socially responsible, produce knowledge that is useful to humanity (Vallaey, 2007) and put an end the ethical deficit that bankrupts a country (Kliksberg, 2004), including inalienable rights and duties, as Alejandro Llanos (1999) explained in Civic Humanism.

In addition we must be aware that invisible teaching and hidden curricula, the pioneers, which, according to Vallaey (2007), legitimized prejudices, values, and discrimination, are present dangers (Burke, 2002). As Vallaey (2007) noted, in ethics, the heart, the soul is

“made of life and values that are actually instilled in our students” (p.8). To support this we shall translate the words of Peruvian writer Vargas Llosa (2001):

There is nothing sadder and more decadent than a university with students and professors who are conformists; but the critical spirit, inconformity, inquisitiveness and rebelliousness are only present within when there is ample space for controversy and a variety of opinions, which allow democracy and a culture of liberty to thrive. Outside, rebellion runs the risk of turning into inquisition, dogma, violence, and terror.

We shall temporarily settle for the words of Adam Smith (as cited in Sen, 2008): “It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest” (p.4). We must make just decisions. But, as Lou Marinoff (2004) noted, “your motives as well as your deeds must be honest” (p.25).

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