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## **PROJECT NARRATIVE**

### **Universidad del Este- Leadership in Education Admistration: Development, Empowering and Reform (LEADER Institute) (Priority 1- Building Leadership Capacity)**

#### **Introduction**

*Sistema Ana G. Méndez/ Universidad del Este*

Universidad del Este (UNE) is part of the Ana G. Méndez University System. The Ana G. Méndez University System (AGMUS) is a non-profit private university system established in 1949 that is licensed by the Puerto Rico Council of Education (CEPR) and fully accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). AGMUS is the third largest university system in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico with over 44,000 students. Presently UNE has a main campus at Carolina and 4 university centers. Universidad del Este (UNE) new mission promotes the integral or constituent development of a diverse student population through research, critical-creative thinking, knowledge construction and application.

During the first semester 2012-2013 the combine Universidad del Este student enrollment (for its main campus and university centers) consisted of 13,070. In the main campus, Carolina, the total enrollment for the said period was 7,237 consisting of 6,785 undergraduate students and 452 graduate students. For the past three years UNE has experienced a steady increase in the number of students registering in its programs. UNE is composed of 8 schools: School of Education, School Science and Technology, School of Social and Human Sciences, School of Health Sciences, School of Professional Studies, School of Continuing Education, IEN Business School, and International School of Hospitality. There is also two other areas: Technical Studies, and Graduate Studies. At present, the institution offers 20 associate degrees, 35 bachelor degrees, 17 master degrees, and 26 certificate programs.

*The School Principal Role*

An effective principal is the foundation of a good school, but the responsibilities of the principal is constantly changing. According to Donald-Bouchard, Cervone, Hayden, Riggins-Newby, and Zarlengo, (2002), each day principals are faced with many issues concerning "instructional leadership, school management, diverse populations, and accountability, mandate that will continue to increase" (p. ii). The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory at Brown University (LAB), in their publication *Addressing the Leadership Challenges Faced by Principals*, discussed the significant role of principals in providing a positive learning environment and finding innovative ways to connect with their school communities. It is certain that to be a successful school administrator and leader, principals must be prepared to overcome many challenges. The regular demands faced by principals today have become more and more multifaceted as the populations they serve continue to grow more diverse. Part of the effectiveness of principals of the past includes skills such as problem solving, good communicating, risk taking, and good management. In addition these principals understood that instruction formed the core of the school. In their publication, the NAESP/LAB team emphasized the great importance and the impact that a school principal has on student achievement: "the school principal is the single most important key player in the educational setting having the single greatest impact on student performance and achievement" (p. 12). As the influential power determining the degree to which a school may or may not be successful, the principal has been faced with a predicament created by the rising, growing role of the principal, a predicament that significantly challenges the future of educational leadership.

*Puerto Rico a High Need LEA*

Opportunities related to raising student achievement and sustaining school-wide improvement are many, especially in low-performing urban schools. Public analysis and the augmented concentration of poverty, particularly in urban settings require effective principals to guide instruction and manage change, especially here in Puerto Rico where 91% (1,321) of the schools perform below the acceptable level. Efficient and resourceful leaders must create instructional designs for transformation and create visions of excellence. School principals must know that they are the ones who shape the teaching-learning environment in which students and teachers succeed. They need to understand the importance of integrating curriculum, instruction, and assessment in a continuous improvement process as well as the significance of creating learning communities within their schools. To assist with these processes, Universidad del Este (UNE), a Hispanic Serving Institution located in Carolina, Puerto Rico has partnered with the Puerto Rico Department of Education (that serves 659,267 children), at the Carolina School District within the San Juan Educational Region (a high need LEA with more than 55% of children from families with incomes below the poverty level), to increase the number of qualified and effective principals on the Island and prepare them to meet the educational needs of the communities they serve.

**PROJECT DESIGN**

The proposed partnership addresses the **LEADER INSTITUTE 2013 Priority 1- Building Leadership Capacity.**

Elzahiri's (2010) dissertation *Impact of Principal's Leadership Style on Teacher Motivation* described the importance of leadership development programs and the role of principals as agents of change.

Studies have showed the importance of a principal's role in school reform and staff development programs (Elenkov & Manev, 2005; Glover, 2007). Establishing a positive relationship between principals and their teachers is a very important strategy in educational leadership. According to Elsegeiny (2005), principals spend most of their time on leadership activities related to school management, and thus, their involvement in classroom learning is often limited. Moreover, principals' leadership responsibilities have become more challenging than ever before, requiring them to use collaborative leadership. Leadership development programs are an essential element of school reform that has gained the attention of many educators and researchers (Can 2009). Leadership that involves shared practice by empowering teachers is among effective leadership methodologies that motivate teachers (Davis & Wilson, 2000). On the other hand, empowering teachers by sharing leadership responsibilities can be a major source for conflict between principals and their teachers (Davis & Wilson). Further, some studies showed a strong connection between a teacher's commitment and school improvement programs that justified the need to focus on teachers' perceptions of effective leadership practice (Kitsantas & Ware, 2007; Richards, 2007). In other words, the teachers' point of view about principal leadership practices has a direct impact on their performance and will help to improve students' achievement (Richards) (p. 1). Studies demonstrate that principals' professional development is crucial for principals' effectiveness, school reform, and students' performance.

In the LEADER Institute Project all professional activities have been designed for current and new principals who are leading persistently lowest-achieving schools.

*Evaluation Criterion 1. The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.*

**Collaborative Enterprise:** The *overall goal* of the Leadership in Educational Administration: Development, Empowering, and Reform (LEADER Institute) project is to develop highly qualified and effective principals at all grade levels capable of utilizing collective instructional leadership that results in increased student achievement. This will be accomplished through a collaborative partnership between UNE and the Puerto Rico Department of Education Carolina School District (District Wide LEA). The LEADER Institute will provide professional development programs in instructional leadership and management, ongoing coaching and mentoring, and financial incentives. Table 1 displays the three major program objectives and accompanying performance outcomes.

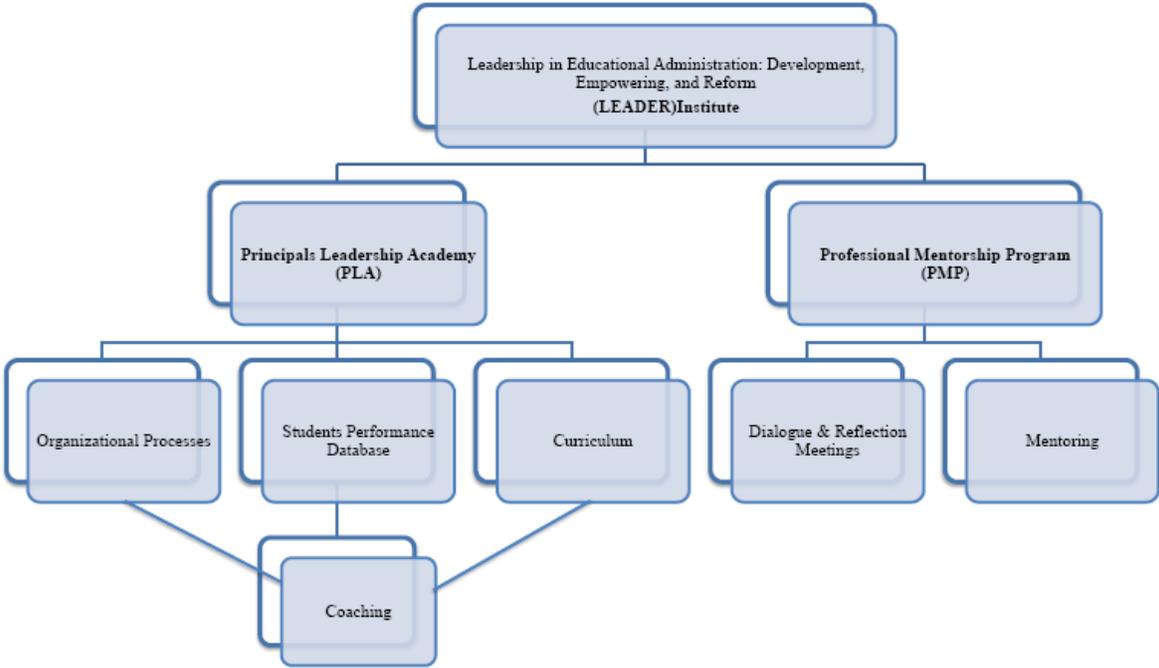
**Table 1. LEADER Institute Objectives and Target Outcomes**

<b>Goal:</b> To implement and establish a <u>L</u> eadership in <u>E</u> ducational <u>A</u> dministration: <u>D</u> evelopment, <u>E</u> mpowering and <u>R</u> eform ( <b>LEADER</b> ) <b>Institute</b> for current and new principals, who are directing persistently lowest-achieving schools at Carolina School District (District Wide LEA).	
<b>Program Objectives</b>	<b>Performance Outcome</b>
1. <i>By the end of 2018 the program will be able to significantly retain the number and percentage of Carolina School District’ principals who participate in the professional development activities.</i>	1. At least 80% of principals in the Carolina School District (District Wide LEA) will complete the PLA and PMP ( <i>figure 1</i> ) professional development program and be retained.
2. <i>An analysis by the end of each year (2013-2018) will demonstrate an increase of the number and percentage of Carolina School District principals who improve their leadership skills and applied them for school transformation according to the baseline establish during the first year on PLA.</i>	1. At least 80% of the participating principals in the PLA and PMP programs will improve leadership skills and implement different strategies to transform their school as measured by <i>In-basket Assessment Instrument</i> .  2. Principals will be able to use data bases, student performance scores (PPAA) to establish the strategies needed to transform their schools by developing an Action Plan at the PLA/PMP programs.

<p>3. At the conclusion of the LEADER Institute project (2018) in a year based comparison Carolina School District' students will statistically significant increase their academic achievement by 10% as measured in the PPAA standardized test.</p>	<p>1. At the end of each year tests scores will indicate a significant change in proficiency levels.</p> <p>2. At the end of the program the District's academic performance data will show an increase of 10% from previous PPAA baseline scores.</p>
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The project's two major components are: (a) a Principals Leadership Academy (PLA), and (b) a Professional Mentorship Program (PMP). Through these components, the proposed project will provide a set of intensive experiences to foster leadership for learning and school improvement. (See *Figure 1*)

**Figure 1. LEADER Institute Components**



**Principals Leadership Academy (PLA).** The first component of the proposed project, PLA, will include professional leadership training and workshops for current and new principals to

develop skills of instructional leadership, continuing education units, and financial incentives and stipends. Topics will include: (a) *Curriculum* (i.e., Spanish, English, mathematics, science, social studies, physical education, arts, special education)—academic standards with grade-level expectations, teaching strategies, assessment and evaluation of learning, curricular mapping, and curriculum integration; (b) *Student Performance Databases*—use of databases, analysis and interpretation of the results, development of instructional plans to improve deficiencies; and, (c) *Organizational Processes*—delegation, decision making, leadership styles, establishing priorities, organization climate and how it affects communication, system perspective, diversity awareness, cultural change, change management, parent and community relations, development and review of school policies and procedures, processes related to faculty (i.e., clinical supervision, faculty evaluation, faculty professional development, and support).

The PLA, implemented during the summer of the project's first four years, will be composed of two cohorts: (a) principals from elementary schools, and (b) principals from middle and high schools. The first cohort will consist of 27 principals, and the second cohort will consist of 17 principals (there are 44 schools in the Carolina School District). Both cohorts will begin the PLA simultaneously and will continue with their professional leadership development plan over the entire five-year period.

The first workshops (20 days, 4 hours per day) will be held in June of Year 1 (Y1) and will concentrate in curriculum, student performance databases, and some organizational processes. In the following years (Y2, Y3, Y4), there will be a 4-days residential academy (each year) that will focus on organizational processes. Workshops will include diverse instructional methodologies (e.g., constructivist, cognitive, experiential, problem solving, problem-based learning [PBL], and case studies) and will use an andragogical approach to address adult learner

needs. Upon completion of the PLA, the school principals will select topic(s) of interest according to their needs in order to prepare their Individual Professional Development Action Plan (IPDAP). Each principal's IPDAP will be review annually and revised to address emerging professional-development needs. Through the PLA workshops, principals will gain content knowledge and leadership strategies that they can adapt for school use. In addition, participating in the PLA will provide opportunities for principals to engage in professional sharing, facilitated planning time, reflection, and coaching toward refinement of their professional development plans. Units of continuous education will be granted to participants in all workshops and residential of the academy. Subject matter experts and educational leadership educators will be contracted to assist with the design and delivery of the PLA component. These experts will also provide the necessary coaching through follow up school visits and by email, text or phone.

Participating principals will also receive coaching in PLA core areas. Workshops facilitators will conduct on-site visits at principals' schools to provide individualized support in the core areas previously discussed during the workshops. The project anticipates the participation of approximately eight (10) coaches (i.e., one specialist for each core subject [Spanish, English, mathematics, science, social studies] one special education specialist, 2 educational leadership specialists, one industrial psychologist, and one clinical psychologist). Coaches will visit principals during Y2 through Y5 to provide personalized support according needs identified in the principals' IPDAP.

**Professional Mentorship Program (PMP).** The second component of the LEADER Institute will incorporate topics considered essential to the successful performance of the school principal. NAESP's (2008) *Leading Learning Communities: Standards for What Principals Should Know*

*and Be Able to do* specifically identify mentoring as a useful strategy in the ongoing professional development of both novice and veteran principals.

The principal learns valuable lessons from other leaders. Just as a principal should institute a mentoring program for teachers within the school, today's principal should also view principal mentoring as a valuable tool resulting in improved leadership skills and, ultimately, a stronger learning environment (NAESP, 2008, p.10).

Based on research-based recommendations for effective principal professional development, the PMP will include self-assessment instruments and activities to help principals identify skills they need to develop. The PMP offers outstanding mentors, flexible processes, customized opportunities, and continuous support over a 5-year period. Mentors will talk with principals about balancing their work and family life, as the demands of the position can often consume an individual's time. In addition, mentors will assist principals in: (a) developing a vision for where their school ought to be; (b) collaborating effectively with teachers, staff, parents and others members of the community; (c) refining their skills in communication, facilitation, and problem solving; and (d) improving student achievement. Mentoring activities are geared to assist principals in growing professional and personally as an administrator and as an agent of change. The PMP will include site visits plus additional communication (e.g., electronic mail, texting, telephone) by mentors to provide just-in-time support to principals, as needed. In addition, the PMP will provide *Dialogues* and *Reflections* meetings where principals and their mentors can discuss topics of interest. These meetings will take place on Saturdays, three times during each semester. The PMP expected outcomes are to: (a) Improve leadership practices for current school administrators; (b) Strengthen competencies of skills and knowledge

for program participants; Increase highly qualified principal mentors; and (c) Increase numbers of highly qualified principals to lead high-need schools.

In particular, mentors will target topics such as conflict resolution, interpersonal communication skills, verbal and written communication techniques, administration and supervision, school leader as a change agent, and other high-priority items (e.g., standards and expectations of the Puerto Rico Department of Education, appropriate learning activities). Mentors selected to participate in the LEADER Institute will be certified principals from successful schools and trained in effective mentoring strategies. At least once each semester, mentors will observe their mentees (i.e., participating principals) to assess their administrative capacities and further develop the mentor-mentee relationship. Visits will be followed by feedback conference sessions with each principal to help them learn from the observations. Observations and reports of conference sessions will be shared with the LEADER project director and the district’s superintendent. The combined support will help the principals develop the attributes of a highly qualified school leader.

The project budget allocates funds for: (a) Mentors will receive compensation for their mentorship and reimbursement for travel expenses; (b) Coaches will receive incentives for their services and reimbursements for travel expenses; and (c) Principals will receive stipends for program participation.

**Table 2. Summary of LEADER Institute Activities**

<i>Activities</i>	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
LEADER Institute presentation to school district and university	X				
Principals’ information meeting	X				
Principals’ recruitment	X				

Identification and recruitment of coaches and mentors	X				
Establishment of policies/procedures for mentoring and coaching	X				
Training and ongoing development for mentors and coaches	X	X	X	X	X
Principals' need assessment and annual follow up	X	X	X	X	X
Implementation of PLA (Summer Academy)	X				
Development of principals' IPDAP and annual review/revision	X	X	X	X	X
Individualized coaching for principals		X	X	X	X
Implementation of PMP		X	X	X	X
Implementation of PLA (Summer Residential Academy)		X	X	X	
Dialogues/Reflections meetings (3 per semester)		X	X	X	X

*Evaluation Criterion 2. The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.*

**Targeted Need.** The Island of Puerto Rico, 106 miles long and 35 miles wide, is one of the most densely populated areas of the world, and socioeconomic indicators for placing it among the poorest areas of the nation. The Island lags significantly behind the nation, both educationally and economically, and shows significant educational needs. The financial hardship affecting students is prominent for our region. The high percentage of poverty level, economic stagnation, and large-scale unemployment in the Island are topics of great concern to all. According to the latest available U. S. Census Bureau data (American Community Survey, 2011), the targeted region has a combined population of over 156,420 inhabitants. Socioeconomic indicators show the area to be among the poorest in the nation, with 41.7% of the all families living below the poverty level and a per capita income of \$10,555. Only 15.8% of the adult population holds a bachelor degree, leaving 81% of the residents as potential first-generation college students. The current unemployment rate for Puerto Rico is 13.4% twice as much as the U. S. Nation of 7%

(U.S. Department of Labor, July 2013). This economic condition continues to worsen due to the current recession that the economy of Puerto Rico is experiencing.

**Table 3. Population Demographics**

<b>Percentage of families and people in Puerto Rico whose income in the past 12 months is below the poverty level</b>	
All families	41.7%
With related children under 18 years	51.7%
With related children under 5 years only	50.0%
Married couple families	30.2%
With related children under 18 years	33.9%
Families with female householder, no husband present	58.4%
All people	45.6%
Under 18 years	57.5%
Related children under 18 years	57.3%
Related children under 5 years	61.5%
Related children 5 to 17 years	56.0%
18 years and over	41.9%
18 to 64 years	42.6%
65 years and over	39.0%
People in families	43.9%
Unrelated individuals 15 years and over	56.1%
<b>School Enrollment</b>	
Enrolled in school	991,812
Percentage enrolled in kindergarten to grade 12	66.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011 American Community Survey

**Schools Profile and Student Body Characteristics.** According to the latest data available for the U. S. Census Bureau (SAIPE, 2011), 55% of the children enrolled in the Puerto Rico School Districts (District Wide LEA) come from families with incomes below the poverty line. Thus, the district satisfies the requirements under component (a) of the ESEA definition of high-need LEA. The targeted region for the implementation of the proposed project is the Carolina School District, which serves a 4,001.6 square miles area. The District provides public education to

both urban and rural communities of which 33% are located in undeveloped lands and isolated rural areas. The District enrolls 15,196 students in 44 high-poverty schools (i.e., 24 elementary schools, 11 middle schools, 6 high schools, 3 campuses serving students in Grades K-9). All of the schools in the district are classified as persistently lowest-achieving schools with school improvement status.

The student population is 100% Hispanic with approximately 85% participating in the federal free or reduced-price lunch program. Of the total enrollment, 11,319 (74.48%) students (ages 5-17 years) are from families living below the poverty levels. Results of the 2012 State Assessment of Knowledge and Skills, known as “*Pruebas Puertorriqueñas de Aprovechamiento Académico y Evaluación Alternativa*” (PPAA), show that many students in the targeted schools have poor academic performance in mathematics, science and communications skills (Spanish and English). Not only is the percentage of students passing the test minimal, but also there has not been an increase in the percentage of students passing the PPAA in the last two years. Currently in Puerto Rico, more than 50% of students are not performing academically, and a total of 1,321(91%) schools have been rated academically unacceptable.

**Table 4. PPAA Results 2011 vs 2012**

PPAA Test Category	2011 Proficiency Rate	2012 Proficiency Rate
Mathematics	13%	13%
Spanish	21%	21%
English	23%	22%
Science	27%	26%
<i>Source: P.R. Department of Education, PPAA Reports 2012-2013</i>		

**Teachers Characteristics.** The Carolina School District currently employs approximately 860 teachers. The 20% of the teachers has a master degree. The **85% (731)** are Highly Qualify

Teachers, but there still a **15% (129)** that are non-Qualify. These are working in teacher's positions for which they are not prepared.

**Principal Characteristics.** The District has a total of 39 principals and 5 vacancies of which 100% are Hispanic and 79% are female. Over 20% of the principals are eligible to retire within the next 5 years and 2 will be retired by next year 2014-15. Only 8% (3) has a doctoral degree and the others have the required master degree. Many school administrators, even those that recently completed certification preparation, were taught to assume managerial responsibilities, rather than instructional leadership tasks. In addition to concerns about sudden retirement by a considerable portion of the school administrator workforce, there is requirement to transform the principalship into *learning leader* role—a new paradigm in which school leaders are first and foremost the instructional leaders. The Department of Education as a strategy has establish to fill vacancies with classroom teachers that would like to become principals, have administration studies or are near to finish the degree. The LEADER Institute will consider these teachers into the program once they are selected.

**Education System.** The educational system of Puerto Rico has been transformed from a highly centralized system to one that grants greater autonomy to schools. In 1999, the Puerto Rico Department of Education adopted the community-school model and conferred a degree of autonomy to over 1,500 schools in the Island. Community schools are now able to manage some aspects of instructional, administrative, and fiscal matters that previously were handled by staff in the district, educational region or central office. In theory, the community-school model should have helped improve the learning-teaching process due to the autonomy granted to school personnel. With the adoption of the community-school model, it is critical for school principals in Puerto Rico to become change agents—visionaries who can inspire in others the need for

innovation, action, and commitment toward the goal of improving student learning. However, according to Castillo (2000), the educational changes undertaken over the last decade occurred so abruptly that both administrators and members of the Puerto Rico Department of Education have had great difficulty adjusting to the changes and ensuring that all parts of the system operate according to expectations. The reality is that many principals of the community schools were not prepared to assume the leadership role and bring about the expected changes.

**Evidence-Based Need for Intervention.** Drs. Odette Piñeiro and Alicia Castillo-Ortiz conducted a study in 2006 to ascertain principals' opinion regarding their experience under the community-school model. Piñeiro and Castillo-Ortiz discovered that many principals were encountering challenges in their leadership role. Regardless of the years of service or experience as a school principal, the majority of the principals identified professional development and administrative support as their greatest need. Of the 1,389 of public system principals that participated in the study, 98% indicated that due to the complexity and diversity of responsibilities as a community school director, continuous professional development is desperately needed to help them efficiently and effectively manage all aspects of the community school.

The majority of the directors that participated in the Piñeiro and Castillo-Ortiz study indicated that their school is located in high-poverty communities with many social problems and economic issues (e.g., high rates of crime or drug use). Among the study participants, 67% of the school principals believed that poverty negatively affects the development of students, and 42% indicated that their students have great difficulty in mastering academic material. The study revealed that in addition to crime and drug-abuse problems, there were other issues negatively impacting student performance (e.g., teenage pregnancy). The percentage of teenage pregnancy

present in the public school system has increased over 10% in the last five years, and family violence has also increased over 15%. These are all issues of great concern—not only due to the impact on communities, but also on community schools and their leaders.

According to the results of Piñeiro and Castillo-Ortiz study, three main stumbling blocks impede principals' performance as school principals: (a) excessive administrative paperwork, (b) insufficient administrative staff, and (c) absenteeism of teachers. These findings confirm that the director's time is spent on administrative work in the school. In addition, it is the school leader's function to determine and assume responsibility for the contingency plans when there is an emergency or when administrative or teaching staff are absent. The latter causes improvisation and dislocates the academic daily hours since there is a need to look for alternative support for students, before being compelled to leave classes and send students home. This absenteeism delays the work of committees or the school council.

The Piñeiro and Castillo-Ortiz study also shows that 68.3% of the principals indicated that the majority of the teachers at their school were not willing to assume additional work outside of their working hours. The concept of community school requires participation of all members of the school community without affecting the school hours. Another fact that must be considered is related with the cooperation and participation of merchants and business owners that are part of the school community. More than half of the principals indicate that they never or almost never have the time to manage the cooperation and participation of these stakeholders.

**Comprehensive Intervention.** The proposed LEADER Institute (both the PLA and the PMP), in addition to the intensive experiences to foster leadership for school improvement, are all supported by practices and strategies that have been proven to be effective (e.g., research studies, externally funded school leadership projects). It is expected that participating principals will

acquire the skills and knowledge needed to be effective instructional leaders and agents of change and that their students and schools will achieve the academic results expected for the communities they serve. Principals participating in the PLA and PMP will gain the needed professional knowledge and skills to achieve goals set by the Carolina School District and to model expected leadership behaviors of an instructional leader required to generate student achievement and school success.

*Evaluation Criterion 3. The extent to which the proposed project is part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and support rigorous academic standards for students.*

**Comprehensive Improvement Effort.** The proposed project activities are part of a comprehensive effort to improve teaching and learning and to support rigorous academic standards for students. The Universidad del Este (UNE) and the Carolina School District (District Wide LEA) have a long history of collaboration and engagement in multiple projects to improve student achievement and involve parents and the community in the teaching-learning processes. Personnel from both the UNE and the Carolina School District have been planning collectively and will continue to work collaboratively for the successful implementation of the proposed LEADER Institute. Both institutional partners will fully leverage their existing resources and assure a systematic approach that continues to deliver standards-based professional development to the district and university leadership. This partnership will be strengthened via research-based support structures aimed at facilitating turn-around activities at the campus level and holding leadership accountable via monitoring protocols linked to best practices.

Key partnership stakeholders will work collaboratively to articulate a vision that reflects the educational region's current realities and unique local schools and community needs. The Project Director (PD) will engage in meetings with the district superintendent and administrative

staff, school leaders, teachers, students, community members, and policy makers. An Advisory Committee (AC) will be established to ensure the design of the most optimal environment for project activities and to assist with project evaluation. Another role of the AC will be to assist with monitoring and reviewing the progress of project components and to recommend appropriate modifications. The AC will be composed of representatives from the university, the school district, and the local community (i.e., representatives of collaborating businesses and other agencies, appropriate supervisory staff).

**Research-Informed Project Design.** The foundation of the LEADER Institute is the research-evidenced fact that school leadership influences student learning. Both components of the proposed project are geared towards assisting principals to become effective instructional leaders and change agents. Principals will be able to better apply the basic core of successful leadership practices: (a) *setting directions*—charting a clear course that everyone understands, establishing high expectations and using data to track progress and performance, (b) *developing staff*—providing teachers and others in the system with the necessary support and training to succeed, (c) *making the organization work*—ensuring that the entire range of conditions and incentives in districts and schools fully supports rather than inhibits teaching and learning (Wahlstrom, Louis, Leithwood, & Anderson, 2010). Principals can profoundly influence and promote student achievement by working with teachers to shape a school environment conducive to learning, by aligning instruction with a standards-based curriculum, by organizing resources to improve classroom instruction and student learning, and by professional learning and other issues that influence the quality of teaching.

For instance, Fullan (2002) indicates that “effective school leaders are key to large-scale, sustainable education reform” (p. 15). In *The Change Leader*, Fullan (2002) asserts that “for

some time, educators have believed that principals must be instructional leaders if they are to be the effective leaders needed for sustained innovation” (p. 16). For example, Newmann, King, and Youngs (2000) found that school capacity is the crucial variable affecting instructional quality and corresponding student achievement. And at the heart of school capacity are principals focused on the development of teachers' knowledge and skills, professional community, program coherence, and technical resources. Fink and Resnick (2001) examined school districts' efforts to develop principals into instructional leaders who could achieve large-scale turnaround in literacy and numeracy. They described core strategies for developing the role of the principal as instructional leader that included five mutually reinforcing sets of strategic activities: (a) nested learning communities, (b) principal institutes, (c) leadership for instruction, (d) peer learning, and (e) individual coaching. According to Fullan (2002), characterizing instructional leadership as the principal's central role has been a valuable first step in increasing student learning, but it does not go far enough. To ensure deeper learning—to encourage problem solving and thinking skills and to develop and nurture highly motivated and engaged learners, for example—requires mobilizing the energy and capacities of teachers. In turn, to mobilize teachers, we must improve teachers' working conditions and morale. Thus, we need leaders who can create a fundamental transformation in the learning cultures of schools and of the teaching profession itself. The role of the principal as instructional leader is too narrow a concept to carry the weight of the kinds of reforms that will create the schools that we need for the future (p. 16).

A similar study entitled *Learning for Leadership: Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning* (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstron, & Anderson, 2010) asserted that leadership is second only to teacher quality as the defining difference between schools that achieve high student performance and those that do not. The Wallace Foundation (2012) conducted an

analysis of findings from all studies it had funded over a decade and identified five key functions performed by effective principals: (a) establishing visions of academic success, (b) creating and sustaining hospitable learning climate, (c) cultivating leadership throughout school community, (d) expecting and monitoring improved instruction, and (e) managing resources to assure student success (Browne-Ferrigno, 2012). The proposed LEADER Institute will assure these five principal functions are used within the Carolina School District.

*Evaluation Criterion 4. The extent to which the design for implementing and evaluating the proposed project will result in information to guide possible replication of project activities or strategies, including information about the effectiveness of the approach or strategies employed by the project.*

**Project Evaluation and Replication.** The project evaluation for the LEADER Institute will provide guidance about effective strategies for replication of the model in other settings through analysis and synthesis of data collected over the 5-year implementation with focus on finding evidence of changes in the quality of school leadership and changes in student learning. The analyses will determine the effectiveness of individual program strategies by assessing their relationship to changes in student learning and will provide recommendations for areas of the program that may need further development. The project evaluation team will be composed of the Project Director (PD), External Evaluator (EE), and Advisory Committee (AC). Working together, they will identify leadership strategies that evidence impact and provide rich description of those strategies in the annual project reports submitted to the U. S. Department of Education and in the conference presentations and publications the team members make. The intention is to disseminate promising practices developed and tested in the LEADER Institute for utilization in other school districts. Other examples of products developed through this proposed

project and made available for use elsewhere include: (a) Curricula developed for project orientation, PLA, and workshops; (b) Brochures and other resource materials for principals; and (c) Evaluation reports on training activities (e.g., coaching, mentoring). Evaluation results and products will be shared with UNE administration and faculty, Carolina School District personnel, and participating collaborative schools.

LEADER's dissemination strategy will move the results from the original Carolina School District to other school districts in the San Juan Educational Region and to the rest of the educational regions on the Island and to the nation. World Wide Web home pages will be created on servers at the university and at the participating LEA for easy access to project information. The University Information and Technology Center will assist in establishing the Internet-based project home page to make information available for all participants involved in both components (PLA and PMP) of the LEADER Institute. This information includes a handbook on the experience and new ideas tested and assessed through principals' comprehensive plans for improvement. LEADER will be a building block in the statewide school leadership plan that is supported by the entire educational community. With support from members of community groups and personnel at public agencies, the diffusion of project outcomes will be enhanced, both practically and symbolically. University faculty participating in LEADER will conduct research and share results through publications and presentations at national and regional professional conferences. The project's senior staff also will prepare annual reports on the project's development and progress that will highlight major policy interests related to: (a) realization of federal, state, and local educational goals; (b) identification of limitations and obstacles for improving school leadership to promote systematic and institutional reform and the enhancement of professional development for school leaders; and (c) issues associated with the

composition, execution, performance, and lasting cooperative relationships with the university, schools and the community. These reports will be made available in the form of technical reports and monographs for distribution locally, regionally and nationally.

Each of the participating school principals will chart his or her strengths and attainments on a LEADER Principal Inventory tool that is part of their overall Professional Development Plan and Process. The Inventory adapts indicators from existing survey of school leaders, such as CALL (Comprehensive Assessment of Leadership for Learning) and VAL-ED (Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education). All project activities and experiences support positive change in one or more of the Inventory areas. All of the participating principals will have opportunities to advance in these areas by participating in the PLA, external offerings, and focused study groups. After establishing a baseline, principals will periodically reassess to chart their growth on a continuum over the 5-year project. Individual professional development action plans (IPDAP) will focus participants' efforts on concrete, feasible training activities to address a targeted objective and will be revised annually, as needed. Principals will write journal entries and reflections on their progress toward meeting goals. LEADER coaches and mentors will guide, support, challenge, and inspire participating principals toward continuous growth and development.

### **QUALITY OF THE EVALUATION**

*Evaluation Criterion 1. The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.*

**Evaluation Plan.** The developers of the LEADER Institute are committed to careful and transparent evaluation of its project activities. The evaluation plan is thorough yet feasible and

uses appropriate methods to determine whether the project is achieving its intended outcomes.

Project developers adopted the Outcomes Approach Model, which focuses on connecting project resources and activities with desired results, beginning with project planning. According to the W. K. Kellogg Foundation (2004), “Many evaluation experts agree that use of the logic model is an effective way to ensure program success. Using a logic model throughout the program helps organize and systematize program planning, management, and evaluation functions” (p. 5). The evaluation plan describes both short-term (annual) and long-term (five-year) outcomes that are expected to result from planned activities. The evaluation plan is framed by three key questions:

1. Are milestones achieved with the specified personnel, methods, and timelines?
2. Is the project achieving anticipated outcomes?
3. Is the project strengthening the Puerto Rico Department of Education-Carolina School District’s ability to increase the number of competent principals impacting communities and increasing students’ academic performance?

**External Evaluator (EE).** An independent evaluator will be contracted to assist the Project Director (PD), the project staff and the Advisory Committee (AC) in finalizing a framework for the final evaluation design. Dr. Tricia Browne-Ferrigno, Professor of Educational Leadership Studies at the University of Kentucky, has agreed to serve as the EE. She holds a Ph.D. from the University of Colorado Denver (2001) in Educational Leadership and Innovation with concentration in Educational Policy and Administration. Her long-term research agenda centers on leadership preparation, specifically the experiences of program participants, program features and their impact on participant learning, and program evaluation. Dr. Browne-Ferrigno was awarded a grant through the USDE School Leadership Program in 2002 to deliver leadership development to principals working in high-need schools in Central Appalachia; that project was

featured in *Innovative Pathways to School Leadership* (USDE, 2004). She has also conducted program evaluation for The Wallace Foundation and the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate. A full resume is presented in the Attachment Section.

In her role as the EE for the LEADER Institute, Dr. Browne-Ferrigno will work with key personnel to: (a) review the evaluation plan; (b) assist with development of data-collection instruments; (c) provide a thorough, objective opinion on overall success; and (d) validate progress toward objectives. She will make annual year-end site visits to Puerto Rico to analyze and evaluate project progress, meet with key personnel, and report project status orally and in writing, and provide recommendations for improvement. She will use data collected throughout the LEADER Institute (Statistics Specialist and Interviews Translators) to write a summative report on its achievement of stated goals and impact on school leadership within Carolina School District. The PD and EE will work together to ensure compliance with federal requirements in the implementation of the Project and with the Government Procedures and Results Act (GPRA).

**Formative and Summative Assessments.** The LEADER's evaluation is intended to serve both formative and summative purposes. Formative evaluation will be conducted on an ongoing basis to assure needed changes can be made immediately to move the project forward. Summative evaluations will be conducted at the end of each year and at the completion of the project. Year-end summative evaluation reports will assess project outcomes and include the implementation process and results, description of any needed modifications, discussion of challenges to meeting project objectives, and a plan of action to address these challenges. The final summative evaluation report will provide a conclusive assessment for the project and implementation outcomes and their impact on the institution.

Descriptive statistics will be used to analyze the results of pilot tests and demonstrate the extent to which LEADER programs are achieving activity objectives. Qualitative procedures (e.g., surveys, interviews, focus groups) will be used to collect and analyze data from project participants indicating their satisfaction with project components (PLA and PMP). Interviews and surveys will also be used to reflect training and support provider impressions as well as teacher, student, and parent satisfaction with principal quality. Interviews and surveys will be collected by the Statistics Specialist and translated by the Interviews translators. Reflections will serve as a direct means for participants to inform ongoing policy decisions. Statistical analyses, both traditional and automated (e.g., Javastat.html, GraphPad, SPSS), will be employed when advisable to validate baseline data, compare past efforts to current activity, determine the statistical significance ( $p$  value = +/- .05) of results, project possible outcomes based on trends identified by descriptive statistics, and indicate areas of additional need. Reports from trainers, mentors and coaches will be designed to follow a rubric of reporting so that evaluators and project staff can reference performance information to indicate the degree of successful completion of training.

**Qualitative and Quantitative Data.** In summary, the LEADER Institute evaluation will collect numerous forms of qualitative and quantitative data for each of the project objectives (by the Statistics Specialist). These will include, but are not limited to, the number of participants in the project; the number of principals completing PLA and PMP activities; participation logs, surveys and interviews with principals; mentoring and coaches reports; surveys of administrators and teachers; and impact on student achievement as measured by a standardized and curriculum based measures.

*Evaluation Criterion 2. The extent to which the methods of evaluation provide for examining the effectiveness of project implementation strategies.*

**Project Effectiveness.** The evaluation methods are tied to objective performance measures that are clearly related to the project's intended outcomes of meeting the purpose of the USDE School Leadership Program and effectiveness of project's effect on the specified District Wide LEA served will be collected and analyzed. Data will be collected continuously as each strategy is completed. Additional quantitative and qualitative data will be collected, through survey instruments and other protocols designed by project staff with assistance from the EE. Data will be collected at regular intervals (i.e., monthly, quarterly, annually) or whenever deemed necessary. The monthly evaluation report will be an evaluator-designed tool that follows a rubric based on the project timeline and each performance measure. Monthly and quarterly evaluation reports will be used to ensure that each component of implementation is succeeding and that activities meet the project timelines. The Project will also have a web page to disseminate the results as recommended by the External Evaluator and Project Director. The project outlined several strategies to accomplish project goals objectives and outcomes: the Principal Leadership Academy (Curriculum, Student Performance Data Bases, Organizational Processes, Coaching, Individualized Professional Development Action Plans), Professional Mentorship Program (Mentoring, Dialogues/Reflection Meetings), Support Networks, Continuous Assessment, Evaluation.

*Evaluation Criterion 3. The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress towards achieving intended outcomes.*

**Periodic Progress Assessment.** The evaluation plan measures progress toward the project's objectives and performance outcomes, which are directly related to the project goals. Assessing

success at achieving objectives and outcomes at regular intervals throughout the project, rather than waiting until the end, is a built-in mechanism to provide feedback and allow project staff to adjust activities appropriately. The project staff will collect detailed data and use statistical analysis for reporting on the Government Performance Results Act (GPRA) key performance measures for the LEADER Institute (see Table 5).

The evaluation process use parametric measures of central tendency and variability (e.g., means and standard deviations), comparability measures (e.g., t-tests) and non-parametric measures (e.g., median, chi-square ratios) will be employed to examine the results of the data collected through quantitative measures. Moreover, qualitative measures (e.g., interviews, focus groups, surveys, observations, critical ethnographies) will be used to help program participants obtain a critical understanding of the issues involved in this project. Thus, data gathered through LEADER Institute implementation by diverse strategies (e.g., surveys, questionnaires, pre-post tests, observations, rubrics, participant reflections and self-assessments) will be used to determine success of the project.

The planned monthly, quarterly and annual evaluations will help monitor progress towards achieving desired outcomes, determine required mid-corrections, examine the merits and values of activities, and ensure compliance with proposed activities. The information gathered from the summative and formative evaluations will be documented and incorporated into the Annual Performance Report and disseminated through the Project Web page . See Table 5 below for details of the evaluation questions, data sources and expected outcomes for project objectives.

**Table 5. Evaluation Questions, Data Sources, and Expected Outcomes**

<b>Objective 1:</b> <i>By the end of 2018 the program will be able to significantly retain the number and percentage of Carolina School District’ principals who participate in the professional development activities.</i>		
Evaluation Question	Data Sources	Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-How many principals completed the proposed LEADER professional development program?</li> <li>-Have the number and or percentage of principals participating PLA and PMP significantly increased?</li> <li>-How many principals were retained at the PLA/PMP programs?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Attendance roster</li> <li>-Program Completion data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-At least 80% of principals in the Carolina School District (District Wide LEA) will complete the PLA and PMP professional development program and be retain.</li> </ul>
<b>Objective 2:</b> <i>An analysis by the end of each year (2013-2018) will demonstrate an increase of the number and percentage of Carolina School District principals who improve their leadership skills and applied them for school transformation according to the baseline establish during the first year on PLA.</i>		
Evaluation Question	Data Sources	Outcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Have the principals’ leadership performance improved?</li> <li>-Do principals demonstrate increased understanding of school leadership including role for principals in leading improvement in school programs, classroom instruction, and student learning outcomes?</li> <li>-Do principals demonstrate increased understanding of current research on subject-matter learning and its implications for curriculum, instruction, assessment, and school organization?</li> <li>-Do principal educators demonstrate increased knowledge, skills, and effective strategies for planning, implementing, and supporting targeted changes in school programs and classroom instruction based on an</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-In-basket assessment instrument</li> <li>-Pre-post test</li> <li>-Classroom observations</li> <li>-Reflections</li> <li>-Surveys</li> <li>Questionnaires</li> <li>-Self-assessments</li> <li>-Interviews</li> <li>-Focus Groups</li> <li>-Critical Ethnographies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-At least 80% of the participating principals in the PLA and PMP programs will improve leadership skills and implement different strategies to transform their school as measured by In-basket Assessment Instrument.</li> <li>-Principals will be able to use data bases, student performance scores (PPAA) to establish the strategies needed to transform their schools by developing an Action Plan at the PLA/PMP programs.</li> </ul>

<p>Action Plan and using students' performance data? -Have participating principals expressed a high degree of satisfaction with services as measured by surveys and focus groups? -Has the project resulted in change/improvement within the participating school conditions?</p>		
<p><b>Objective 3:</b> <i>At the conclusion of the LEADER Institute project (2018) in a year based comparison Carolina School District' students will statistically significant increase their academic achievement by 10% as measured in the PPAA standardized test.</i></p>		
Evaluation Question	Data Sources	Outcome
<p>-Has there been an increase in the students' academic achievement? -What percentage of students passed the PPAA standardized test with proficiency classification? -To what extent have participating principals contributed to improve students' academic performance?</p>	<p>-PPAA Test Results</p>	<p>-At the end of each year tests scores will indicate a significant change in proficiency levels. -At the end of the program the District's academic performance data will show an increase of 10% from previous PPAA baseline scores.</p>

The plan relies on periodic formative assessments to monitor progress and make changes as necessary (i.e., piloting results and quarterly evaluations). Summative evaluation will occur at the end of each project year to determine attainment of annual objectives and at the end of the project to assess overall success. Both methods will examine both qualitative and quantitative data. See Table 6 for evaluation procedures, personnel, and time where PD=Project Director, EE=External Evaluator, SS= Statistic specialist, and AC=Advisory Committee.

**Table 6. Evaluation Procedures, Personal, and Timeline**

<b>Evaluation Procedures</b>	<b>Personnel</b>	<b>Y1</b>	<b>Y2</b>	<b>Y3</b>	<b>Y4</b>	<b>Y5</b>
Review evaluation requirements for project	PD, EE	X				
Identify existing databases for use in statistical comparisons and determine benchmarks	PD, EE, SS	X				
Define and document baseline for all objectives and set benchmark goals to measure progress	PD, EE, Project Staff	X				
Distribute baseline report to all project staff	PD, EE, SS	X				
Develop and field test data-collection instruments (e.g., surveys, questionnaires, focus-group protocol, observation forms)	PD, EE, Project Staff	X				
Revise data-collection instruments, as needed	PD, EE, SS		X	X	X	X
Evaluate training activities as they occur	PD, EE	X	X	X	X	X
Review progress against benchmark goals; review evaluation plan and revise as needed	PD, EE, AC		X	X	X	X
Collect objective participant outcomes data to measure against baselines and determine progress toward ultimate outcomes	PD, EE	X	X	X	X	X
Survey principals, teachers, students, faculty, staff, parents and/or other assessors	PD, EE, SS	X	X	X	X	X
Synthesize data from all sources identified and prepare formative and summative reports.	PD, EE	X	X	X	X	X
Analyze of end-of-term progress reports and prepare annual or end-of-project report	PD, EE	X	X	X	X	X
Disseminate in-progress findings to appropriate audiences and concerned	PD, EE, Project Staff		X	X	X	X
Prepare final project report for US Department of Education (including EE's report)	PD					X

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT**

*Evaluation Criterion 1. The potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies.*

**Increased Knowledge and Understanding.** The implementation of the proposed project can lead to the understanding of educational problems and issues as well as identify effective strategies. The strategies proposed for the LEADER Institute are: (a) provision of professional development that is customized to the principals' needs and intended to train them to become effective leaders and to create a responsive school environment, (b) provision of a mentoring program to help principals overcome challenges in their own schools, and (c) financial incentives to support the work of mentor principals. The results of this project will validate reported research that school leadership is essential to creating and sustaining high-performing school and that schools leaders must focus on student learning (Louis et al., 2010; The Wallace Foundation, 2012; Wahlstrom et al., 2010). Further, district leaders must attract highly qualified candidates to the profession, use professional development to train principals to become instructional leaders, provide mentoring and coaching that includes continues evaluation (Christic et al., 2009).

The developers of LEADER Institute integrated recommended research strategies to improve K-12 student learning and anticipate that implementation of the aforementioned strategies will be successful in addressing Puerto Rico's pressing needs for high-quality school leadership. To summarize, the project will apply proven school-improvement strategies to the professional development components: PLA and PMP (i.e., one-on-one coaching at principals' work sites, mentor training and individualized support for principals, professional support network). The results of the project's external evaluation will provide the measureable impact of those strategies that will be disseminated broadly through the project web page and other

disseminating tools in Puerto Rico and elsewhere to assist others in improving school leadership and school performance. The main contribution of the proposed project will be constitute a model to transform the school system and turn around low persistently achievement school into effective and successful schools.

*Evaluation Criterion 2. The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement.*

**Systemic Change.** The typical training received by principals from university-based programs and from their districts is not sufficient to prepare them for the expectations of their positions, especially for high-need schools—because that training is not systemic or targeted to specific issues. The school principal has a significant influence on whether quality teaching and learning spreads beyond a single classroom and on whether ineffective practices are discontinued (Darling-Hammond et al. 2007). This is true within the targeted school district where principals currently receive minimum of professional development. The district is experiencing unacceptably low school performance, but without high quality, job-embedded training focused on specific issues, the expected school performance efficiency cannot be accomplished.

The proposed LEADER Institute has been designed to improve significantly principal professional development (e.g., self-understanding, reflection, mentoring) and training (e.g., job-specific responsibilities, on-site coaching, collective sharing) that will result in the following system changes or improvements: (a) In-service principals will be better trained than they are currently, through effective, responsive, and customized academies; and (2) A supportive work environment will be in place to sustain the program through mentoring, coaching, and peer-based professional network. As a result of participating in the LEADER Institute, principals will become effective leaders able to work with others to achieve student-learning and school-

improvement goals efforts. The 5-year program supports cohesive functioning of the schools by providing an upward spiral of improvements to replace the current situation of low-performing schools and to prepare individuals to replace retiring principals. The results of these improvements will result in school effectiveness, leading to greater student achievement.

*Evaluation Criterion 3. The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project, especially improvements in teaching and student achievement.*

**Anticipated Impact.** Several outcomes of importance are anticipated as a result of implementing the proposed LEADER Institute, which is expected to improve the performance of 44- 50 (considering new principals that will cover vacancies) principals over a 5-year period. As a result of the intensive continuous professional development and training provided through seminars, mentoring, and coaching, all participating school leaders should be successful and able to make significant changes in the communities they serve. Teachers and students performance are expected to improve significantly.

With an increased number of highly qualified school administrators in schools, it is anticipated that student learning and thus their performance on state-mandated test increase. Other positive outcomes include improved and expanded collaborative partnerships between the Universidad del Este (UNE) and the Carolina School District (District Wide LEA) as well as the school communities in the northeastern regions of Puerto Rico. These partnerships are vital to providing high-quality leadership development experiences to the school administrators. The success of the program relies, in part, on the quality of educational, supportive, and managerial experiences participants are provided—since these experiences enable the school administrator to connect theory and practice through authentic school interactions. Making theoretical and practical connections enables principals to apply leadership strategies to help their teachers and

staff acquires leadership and innovative skills to address the needs of the students they serve and to engage with their principals in school-improvement efforts. Finally, implementation of LEADER will lead to the development of a research-based school administrator mentoring and coaching model. Periodic and ongoing evaluations of the program will lead to a model for the school administrator mentoring/coaching program that can be used to improve and may be replicated in other appropriate settings.

### **QUALITY OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

*Evaluation Criterion 1. The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.*

The management of the LEADER Institute will fall under the primary auspices of the Universidad del Este (UNE) working with the Carolina School District, of the San Juan Educational Region. The project management plan clearly communicates the intent to focus the human and fiscal resources necessary on the proposed delivery of services to program participants. The proposed project staff positions have been designed to provide quality support in each of the objective areas.

Coordination and collaboration are key elements to implement a successful project. UNE will provide technical assistance with training, support services, mentoring, coaching, project oversight, evaluation, technology resources, library services, and Internet access. The Carolina School District superintendent will assist the Project Director (PD) with recruitment of principals, identification of exceptional principals to serve as mentors, and support services.

The proposed project will fund time allocated for LEADER key project personnel tasks and responsibilities: the PD, Program Coordinator, Administrative Assistant, Mentors,

Consultants (i.e., workshops facilitators and coaches), Statistics Specialist, Interviews Translators, Web designer, and External Evaluator (EE). Working collaboratively and independently, these key personnel will ensure that all activities and services are delivered on time and are of required quality. The management plan also includes the establishment of an Advisory Committee (AC) that includes appropriate district staff and key personnel. The PD will assume oversight duties of management and responsibility for ensuring that program goals and objectives are met; thereby providing high-quality services that meet the needs of the participants.

The LEADER Institute will comply with all federal statutes related to nondiscrimination. The proposed project will comply with Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) enacted as part of the Improving Americas Schools Act of 1994. Both UNE and the Carolina School District are committed to ensuring equal access and treatment from individuals who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented. The UNE provides equal employment opportunity and non-discrimination without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, or status as veteran or disabled veterans.

**Project Director** (Project time: 40%). Dr. Noemi Ruiz, Associate Dean and Associate Professor in the School of Education at UNE, will serve as project director. She holds an EdD in Curriculum and Teaching from the University of Puerto Rico and a MA Educational Administration and Supervision from the University of Phoenix. Dr. Ruiz duties include project oversight, coordinating staff and consultants, data collection, working with the external evaluator, and reporting to U.S. Department of Education and others. Dr. Ruiz will dedicate 40% of her time for the administration of the project. Dr. Ruiz will work directly with the

Carolina School District superintendent, providing leadership and expertise both at the local and regional levels. (See Attachment Section for Curriculum Vitae)

**Project Coordinator** (Project time: 100%). A talented individual with an exemplary track record of administrative leadership in high-poverty school districts will be hired as the full-time project coordinator. The individual hired for this position must possess communication skills and a fundamental belief in the power of university-school collaboration and shared governance. The project coordinator will collaborate (weekly) with the PD and will lead the planning and implementation of the professional development and training activities. The project coordinator will champion high and uncompromising expectations and build personal relationships with the district leaders. The project coordinator will ensure that the coordination of services on the school campuses occurs and will assess participants for professional leadership development that will contribute to student achievement and school improvement. The project director will be responsible for collaborating with the participating district and schools for the implementation of a quality program. Minimum qualifications include: (a) At least a master's degree in education, leadership, administration and supervision or related field; (b) At least five years of management experience in higher education as administrator of federal grant program or similar program, familiar with designing, implementing and evaluating courses; (c) Supervisory skills and proven excellent written and oral communication skills; (d) Ability to communicate effectively with professional personnel; and (e) Ability to work in a team setting.

**Administrative Assistant** (Project time: 100%). A full-time administrative assistant will be hired to provide support services to project personnel and be responsible for performing the expected clerical and office management functions (e.g., word processing, maintaining project administrative records, referring participants and others with questions to the appropriate staff

member, assisting staff members with clerical duties as requested, tracking of hardware and software on loan to students, communicating effectively in English and Spanish in both oral and written form and other duties as required). Minimum qualifications for this position include: (a) a BA degree in business management or related field preferred, (b) two or more years experience in a secretarial or other position of responsibility, (c) knowledge and skills in basic computer applications, including word processing, databases and spreadsheets, (d) ability to interact effectively with public in both in oral and written form, in English and Spanish, (e) ability to relate well to co-workers and faculty in a university or school setting.

**External Evaluator.** Dr. Tricia Browne-Ferrigno, Professor of Educational Leadership Studies at the University of Kentucky, has agreed to serve as external evaluator for the LEADER Institute. She has experience as project director of principal-development program funded by the U.S. Department of Education and as a program evaluator for The Wallace Foundation and Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate. She will collaborate with the PD to complete tasks displayed in Table 6 above as well as: (a) recommend additional procedures for data collection and analysis to assure adequate information for program evaluation; (b) track progress of objective achievement, assist in identifying problems, and recommend changes; (c) monitor compliance with federal regulations and guidelines regarding grant administration; (d) conduct at least one site visit in Puerto Rico each year to evaluate the project progress and meet with project staff and others to discuss project progress; (e) attend project-related meetings in Washington, DC or participating in virtual meetings as required; and (f) provide annual evaluation reports.

**Statistics Specialist** (Project time: 100%). A statistic specialist will be hired for the project and assume responsibility for collecting and managing project data from diverse sources (e.g., principal, coaches, mentors, training facilitators) and in diverse forms (e.g., online surveys,

questionnaires, K-12 student achievement databases). He/she will work with school district and school personnel for the collection, as needed, and assist the PD and EE with data analysis.

Minimum qualifications: (a) BS in Statistics or related field. (b) Technical awareness of coding systems, data types and data structures used to store student demographics, and personnel data in databases. (c) Conceptual awareness of how data is organized and analyzed. (d) Experience with computer-based reporting and analysis tools. (e) Understanding of the value and use of standardized definitions, calculations, naming, and data storage conventions when working with such tools. (f) Understanding of basic relational database concepts, SPSS, SQL syntax, and coding practices.

**Mentors** (Project time: 20%). Mentors will be hired to provide one-to-one or small group mentoring to participating principals, and will interact with participants on both a formal and informal basis to ensure that participants develop the leadership skills needed to improve school and students performance. For the academic year, the mentor will report participant progress to the Project Director. Mentors and principals will meet as needed. Minimum qualification for this position are: (a) award of at least a master's degree in school administrator or leadership, (b) service as principal of a successful school, and (c) genuine interest in and commitment to work with the targeted population.

**Consultants** (Training Facilitators and Coaches). Training facilitators and subject-matter experts will be hired to provide professional development in the areas of school leadership, school administration and management, teacher and student assessment, mentoring strategies, best practices and curriculum instruction, among others. Minimum qualifications include a master's degree and expertise in required area.

**Interviews Translators.** Five translators will be hired to translate record tapes at the dialogues, focus groups and interviews. It takes about 3 minutes to transcribe 1 minute of audio tape recorded. Translators will be in charge of transcribing audio tapes in order to facilitate the External Evaluator analysis in a timely manner for better results and reports.

**Web designer.** The web designer will create designs, concepts, and sample layouts for the LEADER Project Web page.

**Advisory Committee.** The Advisory Committee for the LEADER Institute will include the following professionals: (a) UNE Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Mildred Huertas; (b) UNE Associate Vice-Chancellor of Evaluation and Assessment, Dr. Ezequiel Bayuelo; (c) UNE Dean of School of Education, Dr. Maria del Carmen Arribas; (d) Carolina School District Superintendent, Dr. Luis Orengo; and (e) two representatives from the school district or community stakeholders.

**Project Management Timeline.** The objectives of the project have been clearly written and are measurable so that the Project Director and Project Coordinator can review the success of the program on a monthly, quarterly, and yearly basis and can be held accountable for program implementation; other events that are short term will be measured through the use of evaluation surveys or committee meetings conducted at the end of each activity. The LEADER Timetable outlines the major project activities and the time schedule of their implementation, as well as providing clearly define responsibilities and milestones.

**Table 7. *Project Management Plan Timeline***

Activities	Timeline	Personnel	Outcomes
*Upon notice of grant award, meet with collaborative school district to discuss plan for implementing the Project.	Fall 2013	Project Director	Plan for program implementation will be activated.

<p>*Develop program brochures and fliers and program manual that describes all aspects of project staff and school partners.</p> <p>*Disseminate program to schools in the district and the University community.</p> <p>*Recruit participants and conduct assessment.</p>		<p>Project Staff</p> <p>Project Staff</p> <p>Project Director</p>	<p>Brochures, flyers and Program Manual developed.</p> <p>Project disseminated through the District, schools and university community.</p> <p>Principals recruited; Cohorts created; Training Needs identified; Baselines established.</p>
<p>*Design, implement, coordinate and monitor the various components of the program and establish baseline information.</p> <p>--Coordinate Project activities to include: Leadership Academy training seminars, Mentoring program, (consultants, materials, payment forms, handouts, audio visual equipment, training sites, etc.).</p> <p>--Provide coaching to school principals, and training for program participants.</p>	<p>Fall 2013 Ongoing</p> <p>Spring 2014 and ongoing</p> <p>Fall 2013</p>	<p>Project Director</p> <p>Project Director Project Coordinator Mentors</p> <p>Coaches</p>	<p>Yearly schedule of activities and baseline established.</p> <p>PLA's Work Plan developed and implemented. Academy Seminars delivered to principals within the district. PMP developed. Mentors' assisting the participating principals.</p> <p>Coaching component in place.</p>

* Established Advisory Committee	Fall 2013	Project Director	Advisory Committee convened.
*Work with principals, using the developed mentoring model. Observe principals in their schools for implementation of effective leadership strategies.	Ongoing	Mentors	Mentoring Program in place. Principals receiving assistance needed to ensure a successful administration and leadership, as well as improvement in students' achievement.
*Maintain accurate budget Expenditures	Ongoing	Project Director	Accurate record keeping must be maintained at all times.
*Attend professional development conferences related to Leadership and Legal matters	Ongoing	Project Coordinator	Stay current on school administration and management, mentor, and coaching training and other school administration and leadership issues.
*Assist the Project Director with all office responsibilities, advisement process, setting up appointments, maintaining an accurate budget and files on all participants, etc.	Ongoing	Adm. Assistant	The Project will keep current files and documentation on all Participants.
*Evaluate effectiveness appropriateness, and usefulness of the project. Monitor the program to ensure that program goals and objectives are met in a timely manner. Appropriate reports must be submitted twice	Annually Ongoing	External Evaluator Statistic Specialist Interviews Translators	Meet/exceed program goals and objectives. Compliance with all standards and expectations of the proposal so that the program can continue to be funded. Program is evaluated for effectiveness.

a year.			
*Assist principals with leadership skills, image, parent conferencing, management skills, budgeting, procedures, discipline management, assessment, etc; conduct monthly observations; submit written reports and maintain log of monthly contact hours.	Ongoing	Mentors Coaches Statistic Specialist	The participants receiving support and assistance needed to ensure a successful school leadership. All participants receiving coaching services and applying skills sets. All services highly rated.
*Present successful training workshops/seminars in the Principal Standards set by the State and other areas of leadership and school administration and management.	Summer 2014 and Ongoing	Workshop Consultants	Workshops/Seminars will also assist principals to be effective leaders, and agents of change transforming teaching and learning process and positively impacting student achievement.

*Evaluation Criterion 2. The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project.*

**Adequacy of Procedures.** The close coordination among key personnel (i.e., project director, project coordinator, administrative assistant, external evaluator, statistics specialists, interviews translators, mentors, coaches) and school district staff will allow for continues feedback, reactions, and assessment of project services and activities. This feedback will yield valuable information that will be used to modify and improve delivery methods.

The systematic evaluation process will involve all staff in the reporting and feedback loop with key staff and the external evaluator examining the project implementation and outcome data on an annual basis. The external evaluator will write an annual evaluation report

that will be reviewed by the project director and the district Superintendent. These reports will contain a data summary, conclusions, commendations, and recommendations that will be discussed and analyzed at subsequent staff meetings.

A comprehensive communized database (developed and maintained by the statistics specialist) will facilitate rapid and accurate compilation of project statistics monthly, quarterly, and annually to track progress in achieving objectives clearly. Data accumulated through this process will be evaluated and disseminated through different tools. UNE as the lead institution will develop a series of procedures to ensure sound fiscal management through comprehensive internal monitoring and reporting systems, efficient project operation resulting in the achievement of objectives, and avoidance of any supplanting of institutional operating funds with federal funds. This will insure appropriate support of the Project, objective assessment of achievement, and communication of the evaluation information to key district decision-makers. Achievement of these objectives will result in the following outcomes:

- The project will operate smoothly and in full compliance with both institutional and federal requirements;
- Internal/external audits will validate the integrity of the use of project's funds;
- Each year of the grant period consistent progress will be demonstrated toward the specific objectives for that timeframe, and toward the overall project goals and objectives;
- The project will have significant, measurable impact on school leadership and student achievement.

**Monitoring and Reporting.** In this complex collaborative project, management perhaps is the single most critical determinant of success. The Project Director will have overall responsibility

in all aspects of the Project. In coordination with the School Superintendent, the Project Director will be responsible for the development of a procedures manual, which details the steps to be followed for monitoring personnel performance, the preparation of reports, and budget administration and revision. Said procedures manual will be revised and updated on an annual basis, as required. The Project Director will prepare quarterly and annually reports including scheduled tasks that have been completed, impediments to accomplishment of tasks, tasks not completed on schedule and proposed corrective actions, progress toward attainment of Project goals and objectives, budget status and evaluation data. The Project Director will use these reports and data from monthly meetings with project staff to prepare quarterly reports for the partnership executive cabinet. These reports will form the basis of end-of-year reports for each of the grant periods and will serve as the primary source for reports to the USDE LEADER Office. The Project Director, and UNE as the fiscal agent, will have access to the university's financial management information system in order to monitor project expenses. By accessing the Project account, the Project Director will be able to see the amounts spent, amounts committed and balances remaining for each budget line item. These reports will be reviewed by the Project Director to assist in monitoring project progress. With this information in hand, project staff will be able to determine whether or not budget revisions or transfers are required.

**Communication.** The Project Director will have primary responsibility for communicating to the Carolina School District and the University community information concerning the LEADER Institute. In communicating with the institutions, the Project Director will use available forums and tools including its Web page.

Mr. Alberto Maldonado, Esq. UNE's chancellor and the Auxiliary Vice-presidency of Sponsored Programs and Financial Management (SPFM) will have fiscal oversight for the

project financial management and remain fully informed of its progress, but will delegate authority for the program management to the Project Director. The Project Director will be responsible for bringing together all the resources --institutional and federal-- necessary to make the project a success and will be the contact person with both project's partners and the U.S. Department of Education School Leadership Program. The Project Director will be accountable for the use of all resources and will be answerable for all program-related decisions.

The Organizational Chart that follows outlines the authority for the key personnel.

