

PSYCHOLOGISTS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

May 14, 2010

Att. Ygrí Rivera,
President Board of Trustees
University of Puerto Rico

Dr. José Ramón de la Torre
President
University of Puerto Rico

Dr. Ana Guadalupe
Chancellor
University of Puerto Rico-Río Piedras Campus

Dear Att. Rivera, Dr. de la Torre, and Dr. Guadalupe:

The large student-led strikes on several of your campuses have made news throughout the world. As an international organization, Psychologists for Social Responsibility (PsySR) has heard about the protests, and also about a large police presence that has thus far led to scuffles and difficulties for students in need of food and water. We have been in touch with members of the Puerto Rican Psychology Association (PRPA) and we are aware of their active efforts to support non-violence, dialogue, and negotiation.

PsySR stands with the PRPA on these principles. We support the rights of students and others to protest non-violently. We support their right to protest without threat and intimidation by the police, and to do so with access to food and water.

From what we have learned, the protesting students believe that a number of trends in administration discussions, including budget cuts and steps involving privatization, will put access to a good public education outside the reach of many students. We hope the administration recognizes the value of students who are willing to stand up for academic excellence and the right of all citizens to such an education.

Beyond the specifics of these grievances, as we write this letter we are reminded that exactly 40 years ago students at Jackson State University in Mississippi were killed in protests. This occurred ten days after the shootings at Kent State University. The world does not want to see violence--or even the threat of violence--against students today.

We and many others in various realms of academia and practice will be paying close attention to the events in Puerto Rico as they transpire. We hope the administration will renew its efforts to negotiate and dialogue with the students' representatives. We hope for a safe and peaceful resolution to this process.

Sincerely,

The Steering Committee of Psychologists for Social Responsibility