



February 5, 2025

Open Letter from the English Department

The Department of English in the College of Humanities emphatically rejects the recent public disparagement of our undergraduate program, among 64 programs institution-wide targeted for moratorium, that was based on conjecture and a faulty metric that failed to consider the purpose, educational value, societal benefit, and scope of our program and its role within the University of Puerto Rico's mission and for public education in Puerto Rico. We are a dynamic department with a **healthy number of active students in our undergraduate major and minors**, an international faculty of award-winning professors, and a robust and ever-evolving course offering that is global in scope.

Our curriculum allows students from every region of Puerto Rico to approach English as a lingua franca through which they engage the Puerto Rican diaspora, the Caribbean region, the United States, and the world. Along with our fellow programs in the College of Humanities, we have been leaders on the island in creating spaces of cross-cultural and interpersonal exchange where students learn the art of healthy debate and the nuances of communication, skills central to the UPRRP mission and vital to a democratic society.

Our courses feature a variety of critical approaches on topics crucial to students in Puerto Rico and their understanding of how language, narratives, and visual media shape their world. These include courses in Caribbean, African, and Diaspora literatures and cultures; linguistics; British and US literatures; human communication; writing (creative, academic, scientific, journalistic), English as a Second Language; translation; public speaking; literature-in-translation from India, East and Southeast Asia; the graphic novel and web-based storytelling; film and media studies; disability studies; travel courses; fantasy; and science fiction; as well as interdisciplinary courses addressing cultural identity, globalization and transnationalism, climate disaster, race, trauma, and sexuality.

These courses not only attract our majors and minors but also serve the broader university community. We provide the **Second-year English** requirement for colleges of Sciences, Communication, and Education, along with Humanities; we offer a range of courses that meet the **General Literature Requirement** for our campus bachelor's degree; we give the majority of the courses toward the popular **Medical Humanities Minor** (initiated by our program through an NEH funded, interdisciplinary faculty development grant), and we contribute to other programs on campus, including most recently Programa de Afrodescendencia. Our commitment to our students extends beyond the classroom in our collaboration with *Tonguas* (a bilingual

journal for student art and writing) and the English Majors Association to organize academic and student literary events.

Through our curriculum and our mentoring of students of all socioeconomic backgrounds, we prepare them to successfully pursue graduate degrees at the best universities in the world, including our own Ph.D. program, uniquely focused on Anglophone Caribbean language and literature, as well as for a variety of professions. Our graduate programs retain talent, nurture professional activity and contribute academic research in Puerto Rico at a time of historic depopulation. We are proud of our many successful alumni, including published creative writers, educators, editors, translators, journalists, technical writers, museum curators, lawyers, and filmmakers. With an eye to future student success stories, along with ongoing research, we reaffirm our commitment to our programs and the Humanities to provide **affordable public education** essential to Puerto Rico's recovery.

Sincerely,

Professors and Administration of Department of English, College of Humanities