

Letter of Recommendation for Dr. Edwin J. Barea Rodriguez

For the Position of President, University of Puerto Rico

March 21, 2025

The Board's Search and Consultation Committee

Dear Distinguished Members of the Search and Consultation Committee,

It is a great honor to recommend Dr. Edwin Barea-Rodriguez for the position of President at the University of Puerto Rico (UPR). I have known Dr. Barea since the fall of 1998 when I entered the Ph.D. program at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA). I became a member of his laboratory and went on to receive my Ph.D. degree with him as my principal investigator. Although it has been many years since I have been in his lab, he is still one of the first people I turn to for advice whenever I need it. His guidance and mentorship have not only greatly influenced myself but many other students that I know. I believe he possesses the qualities needed to successfully fulfill the position of President of UPR.

Dr. Barea's academic and administrative leadership abilities are evident by the positions he has held at UTSA: chair of the Department of Biology, Vice-Provost for Resource Management for Instructional Innovation, Associate Dean of Student Success, and Executive Director for Student Inclusive Initiatives. I can attest to his leadership strengths firsthand by witnessing them daily in his lab. He has always led by example and has promoted knowledge as being critical in building a solid leadership foundation. Furthermore, he has provided his students with the training and resources needed to develop their own leadership skills and talents that could then be leveraged for their personal and professional success. This has certainly proved invaluable to my career throughout the years, as he has always encouraged me to continually develop my leadership abilities. Dr. Barea's constant desire for knowledge and his forward thinking will serve UPR well and will promote its continued growth as a leading university in the world.

One of the most outstanding attributes of Dr. Barea is his passion for student success. His work with the Research Initiative for Scientific Enhancement (RISE), Maximizing Access to Research Careers (MARC), and the Initiative in Maximizing Student Development (IMSD) programs demonstrates his commitment to supporting students in their studies as well as their pursuit of higher education. From my personal experience, he provided me with opportunities to visit other labs as well as attend programs to help advance my professional development. For example, I was able to attend the Minority Faculty-Student Partnership, Traineeships in Biotechnology at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, MD, and SPINES (Summer Program in Neuroscience, Ethics, and Survival) at the Marine Biological Laboratory (MBL) in Woods Hole, MA. Additionally, he gave all his lab students opportunities to assist on NIH grants and manuscripts as well as submit abstracts and present their research at national conferences. These opportunities have personally affected me as the medical writing career path I chose was something that came directly from the writing experience I gained from my time in his laboratory. I am certain that Dr. Barea will continue to dedicate his time in creating an environment of student success at UPR.

Dr. Barea has experience managing the financial responsibilities associated with his positions as department chair and Vice-Provost as well as his work with the RISE and MARC programs. He has learned to successfully work with others to oversee these massive budgets and ensure that funds are allocated properly. Before he held these positions, Dr. Barea has always been a steward of finance within his own lab. During my graduate years, he encouraged me to apply for fellowships and grants to secure funding not only for myself but for my dissertation research. Through his guidance and support, I applied to and was awarded funding by the American Psychological Association-Minority Fellowship Program in Neuroscience, the Alfred P. Sloan Minority Ph.D. Program for Predoctoral Fellowship, and a Minority Dissertation Research Grant in Aging from NIH/NIA, which helped fund my graduate studies and dissertation research. His ability to effectively manage the finances of the various positions that he has held or the programs he has been a part of will only benefit UPR and contribute to its success.

I have been extremely fortunate that Dr. Barea's mentorship has extended well past my years in his lab, and I would not be where I am today without his guidance and enduring belief in my abilities to succeed in life. I have no doubt that he will have the same impact on the faculty, students, and community of UPR if given the opportunity to demonstrate his leadership capabilities, his management, financial and interpersonal skills, and his dedication to student success. I strongly support Dr. Barea's application for the position of President of UPR.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julissa Ramos".

Julissa V. Ramos, Ph.D.

Senior Manager, Medical Publications

A series of five horizontal black bars of varying lengths, used to redact contact information such as a phone number, email address, and mailing address.