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**Polytechnic Institute
of Porto Rico**

**Report of the President to the Board of Trustees
April 13, 1922**

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Offices
San Germán, Porto Rico, and
Room 706, 156 Fifth Ave., New York

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**THE TENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT TO
THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE POLYTECHNIC
INSTITUTE OF PORTO RICO.**

This, the tenth year, has been a most remarkable year and the best of the ten. It has been remarkable in the number of applications for admission constantly coming into the office. There has been an average of about three applications daily during the school year since September, fully 500 more than we could admit. It has been a gratifying year to know that so few of those admitted have left. It is an epoch in that for the first time we offered the first year college work, and of the 13 graduates from the fourth year high school last June, 10 returned to enter the Freshman college class. For the first time in our history have local receipts for tuition and board passed into the teens. The local receipts for the year 1920-21 were \$12,303.18, and for this year were estimated at \$13,000.00, but reached the handsome sum of \$14,803.18, or 7/16 of the total expenditures. Students paid all expenditures except salaries, and \$1000 on salaries. It has been a thrilling year. For a second time a storm unroofed several of our houses. It did it so cleverly this time that several girls did not know the roof had gone till they were pulled out from under their beds where they had fallen asleep from weariness. It has been a year of surprising realizations. One of the happiest surprises of the year to the teachers and students is to watch daily the walls of the beautiful new Science Hall growing into reality. This building is bringing renewed hope and assurance to all Porto Rico. There is no other building on the island that can compare with it in imposing and architectural appearance. Though not completely finished the commencement exercises are to be held in this attractive building. The strength of a giant, the beauty of youth and

the simplicity of true greatness have been worked into the design of this our first large building by Mr. Stoughton our architect, till one feels the impressiveness of refined character expressed in concrete.

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The religious life has run deep this year. There are 20 candidates for the ministry. Fully one-half of the students are actively engaged in Sunday School work outside of the Institute. Eleven groups of students hold 12 services weekly. Some of the services so conducted have an average attendance of 120. Thirty-two students were baptized at a recent communion service. Most of the boarding students, in fact all but about a dozen of the larger students are active members of the church. The Evangelical Union of Porto Rico has made the Institute its permanent location for Summer Conferences. All denominations come here where local and foreign speakers are brought to conduct the meetings. The object is to give all Christians an opportunity to get together and to receive new power for their work. It is in spirit a second Northfield.

While the spiritual man is cared for we do not forget the physical and the intellectual. Our graduates have been awarded the highest marks in the Summer Normals of the Island for the past five years. So evident has the superiority of the preparation of graduates of the Polytechnic Institute shown itself that last year the Dean of the Summer School publicly announced to all the students that the Polytechnic Institute students had superior advantages over the other High School students and it was not just to compare others with them. We demand of all students high scholarship and through preparation. The teachers always put their best service into the work for and with the students.

We have improved greatly this year on the food of students. The improvement has been along the line of variety of dishes served. Rice and beans, bread, coffee and meat are the staple foods. At the present time our tables are supplied daily with fresh vegetables from our own gardens. Our

gardens are the finest on the Island. It is generally supposed that truck gardens do not pay in Porto Rico, that is, can not be grown. After years of training of one of our graduates we have found in him a man who is growing in the gardens almost everything there is to grow. We hope to make such practical demonstration of truck gardening till some day the common people will produce all green food needed for their families. Porto Ricans are today living on canned or dried food with very little green vegetables. Porto Rico could supply New York with winter vegetables or vegetables the year round could the people only realize the possibility of such. Here lies a broad field of usefulness for our agricultural department.

The Latin is naturally musical. Through the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. D. E. Waid we have a well equipped band of twenty-five pieces. Public concerts are given in the town plaza by our band.

The hospital has been well furnished by the Ladies' Auxiliary. Had we a doctor it would be in use daily from our student body. Nothing serious has appeared but there are many of the youth who need the care of a doctor. Our budget this year does not warrant the addition of a doctor's salary.

The attendance during the year has been exceptionally regular with a high grade of students. The enrollment is as follows:

	Boarding	Town	Total
Girls	81	51	132
Boys	163	52	215
	244	103	347
By ranking:			
Grammar			156
High School			180
First Year College			11
			347

The average per capita cost during the year for board is \$4.96 monthly.

Our institution is today beyond question the most beloved institution of learning on the Island. There is no attempt made to teach sectarian doctrines, but there is no covering up of the fact that the Bible is taught in its entirety establishing the fundamental Bible doctrines accepted by all denominations as essentials of Christianity. It is a Christian institution and apart from that it is nothing.

The firmness of the Porto Rican faith in the Polytechnic Institute is evidenced by their gifts and their desire to attend the school. On March 13 I started out alone to secure \$60,000 for a Girls' Residence Hall. The times are critical in Porto Rico, more so than in New York. Sugar is down below the cost of production to the farmer. The coffee crop was a failure. Banks do not loan money. I divided the \$60,000 up into 600 gifts of \$100. In eleven days of actual soliciting I secured in cash and first-class pledges \$18,150 from 70 individuals. No gift less than \$100 was accepted. Five were for \$1,000 and one for \$2,000. I had to stop soliciting to come to this meeting today. There is no doubt but that the whole \$60,000 will be raised in Porto Rico for the first Residence Hall for Girls. The spirit of the giving in Porto Rico encourages one. The leading jeweler of the Island made his contribution and then followed me to the door of his office saying: "You may hear people say that because you are a Protestant institution they do not care to help you. I want you to understand that such is not true with me. Any institution that is helping Porto Rico has my hearty support. You are doing a great work. May God give you strength and long years till you see those plans all realized." A similar sincere good wish was expressed by almost every man.

This good will is met with a smiling face in every town from students who were once in the Institute for a longer or shorter time. They recall their struggles here but are glad

of their experience for they found here the secret of service, a living faith in God.

Students are stowed away six and seven in a room 12 feet square. The balconies are obstructed by cots, study tables and wash stands. There is no place for such in the rooms. One boy slept for weeks on top of two trunks till a bed could be secured for him. There are hundreds of others who would do the same thing if they could get admission.

I have come to dread the summer months. It is hard to select the few from among so many worthy young people, nearly all of whom are equally qualified for admission. It gives a man the cold sweats to have to say NO to an applicant especially when he knows the student has no other place to go. Of the 438,743 children of Porto Rico, 249,784 can not find a seat in the public schools. The neighboring islands have no schools worthy the name. Santo Domingo and the Virgin Islands are looking to Porto Rico for a place to educate their children. Four students were admitted from the Virgin Islands by name Petersen, Seaman, Mabel and Annie Beatty. After two days of sailing over a rough sea, Mr. Beatty, a two hundred pound, six foot Scotch-Irish, the father of the two girls, landed on us with two boys, Wulff and McIntosh, and a Jacobson girl in addition to the four admitted, not one of whom could speak Spanish. There were no places for the extra three. Mr. Beatty arose with all the fire and firmness of his ancestors when they know they are doing what ought to be done and said: "Sure, Rev. Harris, you will not make me take these children back to their parents. I was asked to bring them and I brought them. They were sea sick all the way over. Their clothes are wet with salt water. Mercy, me! I can not take them back. I will by them beds and they can sleep on the balconies, but don't make me take them back, please, sir." The three are sleeping tonight on the old, rat-infested, dilapidated dormitory balconies.

One of our graduates, now a missionary in Santo Domingo, sent us a Dominican girl with a sunny smile. She

1922
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knew not a word of English. She came a month ahead of time so as to make sure of her enrollment. She is a nice, attractive girl with a small suit case enclosing all her earthly possessions and with that sunny smile that has not come off since I told her she could stay.

Parents accompany their children seeking for admission. They come, some in Packards and Fords, on the train or in ox cart, horseback and a foot. I recall a father riding a thin pony with his long shanked boy walking by his side. The father had recently been hurt in a copper mine. He came from over on the Caribbean coast. The last student possible to admit without some charges had been admitted. The father with his boy started to leave but stopped under the shade of a tree nearby the office. I saw tears rolling down the father's cheeks, tears, not of intercession but of disappointment, of hopelessness for his boy's future. They both left. Later in the day he returned saying, "My chest is crushed in. I am no good any more. My life is a failure. I want my boy to do better. I can leave him nothing. I want to give him an education. I have sold my pony and will pay five dollars monthly till the money is gone. Won't you take him? What else could a fellow do?"

So we are besieged by hundreds of young people whom we can not admit. Everywhere I go they beg me to admit students. I called on my friend don Antonio Barceló, whose name is familiar now to politicians in New York. I had not much more than taken my seat till he began, "Lest I forget it let me ask you if you can take in a boy for me." Then his wife joined her pleas with those of her husband.

Take Porto Rico as the centre. Draw a circle of 1000 miles radius. It will touch or include 16 different nations with a population of 21 millions, sitting in the shade of walls built 100 years before the Pilgrims landed in America. All these are within the field of influence of the Polytechnic Institute. To all these a Christian institution of learning like the Polytechnic Institute should be not only a place to educate their

children but also a model of the highest type and the most modern in equipment after which all these countries may pattern and an honor to the Christian people of North America.

Will you place yourself for a moment in Porto Rico. At our North lies America with her men of vision and action, a nation of Christian homes. Our people are educated, rich and generous, because our standards were set by practical Christian leaders. To the South of us is America, rich in idle resources—probably far richer in natural resources than North America. There are 71 millions of people, 40 millions of whom are semi-pagan. Only a few of the remaining 30 millions are educated. North America has principally one language, the English. South America has principally one language, the Spanish. While midway between the practical Christians of North America and the impractical visionary Christians of South America lies the Pearl of the Antilles, Porto Rico, destined by God to become the common ground of mutual understanding of the two races. Here is where the Latin and Saxon are meeting as they are in no other place. The two languages are official languages and are mutually more generally understood daily. Here in Porto Rico is the place for establishing a standard. A school is the greatest force for promulgating and perpetuating ideas and ideals and practical customs. An education should be broad as well as deep and deep as well as broad. It should take in the whole man, a trained head to think, a developed heart to feel and a strong hand to do, bringing all of the intellectual, spiritual and physical faculties of man into a co-ordinated harmonic service for the common good of the human race and the glory of God. Such an institution is now in operation. And you are the Trustees of its future as well as of its present life. The principles therein at work have attracted the admiration of all. The hills of San Germán are standing out on the horizon of hope of the youth of Porto Rico, Santo Domingo and the Virgin Islands.

You, as trustees, have the greatest opportunity for a

spectacular Christian statesmanship, which if quickly executed will electrify the highest sentiments and hopes of a whole continent. There is not a body of trustees in America today who has such a clean-cut opportunity for the moulding of the Christian standards of education as you have. A thoroughly planned and well equipped college would be seen and felt all over Latin America, and bring a reflex blessing on Saxon America. A big undertaking by you will appeal to everybody. We are not building a school for San Germán, nor yet for the Antilles, though that in itself would be a large undertaking. Our work is much larger. It must be the reaching of the finest type of Latin American and preparing him for the conquest of a continent for Christ and the Christian church.

The hour has struck for action. The people are awakening to higher needs than they can supply in their own countries. They are sending their youth to be educated in the state universities and they go back with all the vices of Saxon degeneration and unbelief. Porto Rico is a thousand miles higher than any of the nearby republics. The Porto Rican is a lovable, humbly-proud and energetic people. Here are to be trained the leaders to set standards for a democratic, Christian South America such as we know and have in our own country.

The physical plans for such an institution have been perfected by one of the best firms of architects of New York City, Stoughton and Stoughton. These two brothers have for years dedicated their study to college plans, having designed a large university for India and another for China. They claim that our campus lends itself best of any they have studied. They expect to make this the crowning work of their lives, both in artistic appearance and utility.

My brother, Mr. Clarence Harris, B. A., a master builder of theoretical and practical training, joins me in offering anew and unreservedly ourselves to Almighty God and to you, His servants, for the accomplishment of this work. The basic materials, sand and rock, are in abundance and cost only

the hauling and the quarrying. And inasmuch as an ever increasing number of willing, strong and efficient body of students is doing a considerable amount of the construction, we have erected and are erecting buildings in first-class workmanship at a cost of one-half of their actual value.

It will take time to erect such an institution. It will take two and a half million dollars. We can safely count on an average of \$30,000 annually from Porto Rican sources, that is, on at least \$500,000 during twenty years. The definitely outlined growth for a number of years will appeal to men of large means and to foundations. The interest on \$2,000,000 together with what Porto Rico would give would erect the Polytechnic Institute as planned within twenty years and leave the school with two millions for endowment and a \$5,000,000 property. This carries its appeal because it is a common sense method that assures the erection of buildings and the perpetuation of the work of a great Christian school. It will sustain this institution for the inculcating of the best religious and civic principles into the lives of youths who in turn will go out to direct individuals and society toward the heights for which man was created.

With such an excellent Board of Trustees as this institution has to guarantee the right use of its funds, a larger sum will be as easily secured as a smaller amount. Let us, therefore, strive for the larger sum and thus secure what one lecturer has sent out to all churches in the United States in reference to the Polytechnic Institute buildings, "which when completed will once more demonstrate Presbyterian sound wisdom and love of substantiality."

John William Harris, President.