UNIVERSIDAD DE PUERTO RICO
RECINTO DE RÍO PIEDRAS

Senado Académico
Secretaría

Certificación Núm. 47
Año Académico 2024-2025

Yo, Beatriz Rivera-Cruz, Secretaria del Senado Académico del Recinto de Río Piedras, Universidad de Puerto Rico, **CERTIFICO QUE:**

En la reunión ordinaria celebrada de forma asincrónica a partir del 4 de diciembre, y culminada de forma presencial el 10 de diciembre de 2024, se acordó:

- Recomendar a la Junta de Gobierno de la Universidad de Puerto Rico la otorgación de la distinción académica de ***Profesor Emérito*** al doctor **José A. Prieto de Jesús**, de la Facultad de Ciencias Naturales.

Y para que así conste, expido la presente Certificación bajo el sello de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras, a los doce días del mes de diciembre del año dos mil veinticuatro.

Beatriz Rivera-Cruz, PhD
Secretaria del Senado

vvr

Certifico correcto:

Agnes M. Bosch Irizarry, PhD
Rectora Interina

Anejo

6 Ave. Universidad
Suite 601
San Juan PR, 00925-2526
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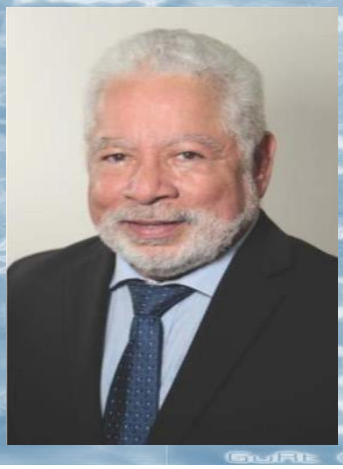
Dr. José A. (Tony) Prieto
Semblance
Nomination Emeritus Professor



Dr. José Antonio Prieto de Jesús, born in the Bronx, New York, on October 15, 1951, and raised in Coamo, Puerto Rico, has forged a distinguished career of over 35 years dedicated to advancing science, education, and mentorship at the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras Campus (UPR-RP). His early passion for science led him to earn a Bachelor's degree in Chemistry in 1973, followed by a Master's in Organic Chemistry in 1977, both from UPR-RP. Dr. Prieto pursued his Ph.D. in Chemistry, which he completed in 1981 under the esteemed NIH-NIGMS MARC Fellowship, conducting research with Professor Gerald L. Larson. His postdoctoral studies at the University of California, Berkeley, with Professor Paul A. Bartlett further honed his expertise in synthetic organic chemistry, which he brought back to UPR-RP as a cornerstone of his academic and research career.

Upon returning to UPR-RP in 1984 as an assistant professor, Dr. Prieto began a career that would span more than three decades, rising through the ranks to full professor. His research focused on organic and organometallic synthesis, particularly the development of chiral methodologies for synthesizing polypropionate-based biologically relevant compounds using epoxide chemistry. His laboratory was recognized for its groundbreaking work on the synthesis of complex natural products such as streptovaricin D, dolabriferol, scytophycin C, and lankanolide. These projects garnered individual funding from prestigious agencies such as the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH), where Dr. Prieto was awarded numerous competitive grants, including the NIH SCORE SC1 grant, often referred to as the equivalent of an NIH R01. Dr. Prieto has been instrumental in mentoring the next generation of scientists. Over his career, he guided 12 Ph.D. students and 3 M.Sc. students to graduation, along with mentoring countless undergraduate students, many of whom have gone on to impactful careers in science and academia. His dedication to student success is reflected not only in the volume of students he has mentored but also in the quality of their work. His lab has produced 41 peer-reviewed publications and he performed over 79 presentations at national and international conferences, demonstrating his consistent and meaningful contributions to scientific knowledge. His students' numerous presentations at prestigious events underscore the broader impact of his work.

Beyond his research and teaching, Dr. Prieto has been a key figure in building the research infrastructure at UPR-RP. He founded and served as the first Director of the Department of Chemistry's core Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR) facility, which for over three decades provided essential services to the academic sector. Dr. Prieto also co-founded the Materials Characterization Center (MCC), where he served as the first Executive Director and remains the current Associate Director of Scientific Affairs. The MCC provides vital analytical services, including NMR, mass spectrometry, X-ray diffraction, and surface microscopy, to academic and industrial communities in Puerto Rico and abroad. Under his leadership, the MCC has grown to become a key resource for scientific research across the island and beyond.

Dr. Prieto's contributions to UPR-RP and the scientific community extend far beyond his own research. He has played a pivotal role in organizing and enhancing scientific activities at both national and international levels. In 2022, Dr. Prieto served on the Organizing Committee for the American Chemical Society Southeastern Regional Meeting (SERMACS) held in San Juan, where his work as Scientific Committee member and Webmaster was instrumental in making the event a success. The meeting was recognized in 2023 with the prestigious ACS ChemLuminary Award for Outstanding Regional Meeting, highlighting Dr. Prieto's leadership in fostering meaningful scientific exchanges. His participation in the IUPAC 2011 World Chemical Congress and the ACS-Puerto Rico Section's SERMACS conference in 2009 further demonstrates his commitment to elevating Puerto Rican science on the global stage.

Dr. Prieto's extensive service to the scientific community also includes his involvement in the NIH-MBRS programs, where he has served as a mentor and committee member for diversity initiatives such as NIH-MARC and NIH-RISE. These programs, designed to foster the development of underrepresented students in biomedical research, have benefited enormously from Dr. Prieto's dedication to mentorship and his passion for increasing diversity in STEM fields. His professional recognition includes several high-profile awards, such as the ACS Puerto Rico Section Excellence in Education Award (2018), the Puerto Rico Chemist Association's Member of the Year Award (2018), the Osvaldo Ramírez Torres Award (2003), and the Leonardo Igaravídez Award from the ACS Puerto Rico Section (1996). These honors reflect Dr. Prieto's sustained excellence in teaching, research, and service to the broader chemical community.

Dr. Prieto's retirement in 2018 did not mark the end of his contributions. Even in retirement, he continues to offer scientific counseling, mentor students, and participate in thesis committees. His expertise has been integral to curriculum revisions in the Department of Chemistry, and he remains a key leader at the MCC, ensuring that its services continue to support cutting-edge research. Additionally, Dr. Prieto regularly delivers invited lectures and workshops for students, professionals, and the general public on topics ranging from NMR spectroscopy to the history of scientific instrumentation in Puerto Rico. His ongoing involvement in these activities is a testament to his unwavering commitment to education and scientific advancement.

Dr. Prieto's legacy extends beyond his remarkable academic and scientific achievements. His dedication to his students, his pivotal role in enhancing UPR-RP's research infrastructure, and his leadership in promoting science in Puerto Rico have left an indelible mark on the institution and the broader scientific community. His commitment to excellence, mentorship, and service makes him exceptionally deserving of the title of Professor Emeritus. Dr. Prieto's contributions continue to elevate the stature of UPR-RP, and his influence on the future of scientific research in Puerto Rico will be felt for generations to come.