José A. Pérez Meléndez – President, Colegio de Químicos de Puerto Rico (CQPR)



Through tailored courses, technological insights, and collaboration channels, we ensure that pharmaceutical, food safety, and biotechnology professionals are equipped to lead and innovate, strengthening Puerto Rico’s position in the global life sciences arena

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As president of Puerto Rico's Colegio de Químicos (CQPR), Dr. José A. Pérez Meléndez is focused on elevating the US territory's standards of chemistry education and creating a bridge between industry and academia. He remarks on the Colegio's strategic partnerships and talent retention efforts aimed at solidifying Puerto Rico’s standing as a chemical sciences hub and CQPR's initiatives to enhance public awareness of essential health and environmental issues.

How does your role as President of the Colegio de Químicos (CQPR) contribute to advancing chemistry education and fostering growth within Puerto Rico’s life sciences ecosystem, particularly in pharmaceuticals, food safety, and biotech?

As President of the CQPR and a chemistry professor at universities across Puerto Rico, my primary focus is to elevate the standards of chemistry education and drive impactful research. By integrating emerging technologies—such as artificial intelligence and advanced instrumentation—into educational and professional practices, we aim to modernize and enrich learning experiences. The Colegio is a vital bridge connecting industry and academia, offering continuous education, specialized training, and resource sharing to keep our members at the forefront of their fields. Through tailored courses, technological insights, and collaboration channels, we ensure that pharmaceutical, food safety, and biotechnology professionals are

equipped to lead and innovate, strengthening Puerto Rico’s position in the global life sciences arena.

How is the Colegio de Químicos fostering collaborations to enhance Puerto Rico’s status in chemistry while addressing talent retention and advancing research and education?

The CQPR is deeply committed to building strategic partnerships that elevate research, education, and professional standards within the chemical sciences. Collaborations with organizations such as the Puerto Rico Consortium for Clinical Investigation (PRCCI) and the Puerto Rico Manufacturers Association (PRMA) enable us to provide graduate students and professionals access to cutting-edge knowledge, advanced equipment, and practical applications, particularly in biochemistry and biotechnology. These efforts bolster our members’ scientific capabilities and expertise, fostering innovation and strengthening connections between academia and industry.

Addressing talent retention is another critical priority, as economic challenges such as lower salaries and high taxation often lead professionals to seek opportunities abroad. To counteract this trend, the Colegio focuses on creating environments that allow talented professionals to flourish locally. Our initiatives emphasize advancing research in critical areas, including biotechnology, green chemistry, and developing plant-based biotechnological solutions for new medicinal compounds. By fostering meaningful collaborations and aligning with international organizations such as the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC), we ensure that our members adhere to global best practices, engage in knowledge transfer, and drive continuous innovation. Through these comprehensive efforts, we aim to solidify Puerto Rico’s standing as a hub for excellence in the chemical sciences.

What initiatives is the Colegio de Químicos leading to engage and empower communities on public health and environmental issues, and what is your broader mission?

Our initiatives prioritize enhancing public awareness of essential health and environmental matters. We focus on educating communities about water and air quality, safe handling of household products, and medication usage. Our outreach uses multiple platforms, including radio, online channels, and social media networks such as YouTube and Facebook, ensuring our educational campaigns reach and empower diverse audiences. The broader mission of the Colegio

is to provide academic and professional development resources, fostering collaboration among professionals, students, and community members to elevate the impact of chemistry on society.

How does the Colegio integrate technological advancements, such as AI-driven quality control and bioprinting, into chemistry education and industry practice?

We are committed to integrating emerging technologies into education and professional practice. Through partnerships with institutions like the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) and Pontificia Universidad Católica de Puerto Rico (PUCPR), Caribbean University of PR, and collaborations with pharmaceutical companies, we equip students and professionals—including those entering the field—with the latest tools and methodologies. By fostering knowledge in areas such as AI, bioprinting, and other technological advancements, we ensure our members are at the forefront of innovation within the chemical sciences.

How does the CQPR foster growth in emerging fields like biotechnology and personalized medicine while supporting the professional development of its members?

The CQPR is dedicated to positioning itself as a hub for education, innovation, and professional collaboration in the chemical sciences. By forging strategic partnerships with the pharmaceutical sector and embracing advancements in biotechnology, personalized medicine, artificial intelligence, and bioprinting, we aim to empower our members to lead and adapt within an evolving industry landscape. Our membership of over 4,000 individuals, including around 800 active license holders, underscores our commitment to lifelong learning. We offer many programs, courses, and resources to support continuous professional growth, license renewal, and skill enhancement, elevating the profession’s standards across Puerto Rico.

My passion for teaching complements these efforts by bridging theoretical knowledge and real-world industry experience. Drawing from my background in the pharmaceutical sector, I provide students with a practical, hands-on perspective that prepares them for the challenges of the modern industry. By focusing on education, research, and innovative practice, we strive to inspire our members and future generations to make impactful contributions to society and the scientific community.

How would you summarize the mission and impact of the Colegio de Químicos?

The Colegio de Químicos is a platform dedicated to advancing education, fostering professional growth, and disseminating knowledge within the field of chemistry. While we emphasize progress and innovation within the pharmaceutical industry, our mission extends to supporting professionals across various sectors and promoting environmental stewardship. We aim to empower individuals to make meaningful contributions, leveraging their expertise to drive positive change. Additionally, I want to emphasize our unwavering commitment to serving and uplifting the community through education, industry development, and the advancement of the chemical sciences. We are dedicated to empowering people, strengthening the profession, and building a brighter, more innovative future for all.

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