Next year, the Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico (PURP) will celebrate its 50th anniversary as one of the pre-eminent academic institutions in the engineering field in Puerto Rico. However, the university has more than one reason to begin celebrating now. For starters, the PURP recently received its recertification as a national center of academic excellence in cyber-defense education by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the National Security Agency. As such, the PURP is the only academic institution of its kind in Puerto Rico and among 181 within the mainland U.S. to hold that certification. The recertification as a center of academic excellence in “information assurance education” is issued every five years after both federal agencies carry out a rigorous review of the academic institutions in areas related to cyber security and information protection. Institutions are also evaluated on their ability to prepare professionals in these areas of study and work, said Ernesto Vázquez-Martínez, executive vice president at the PURP.

“In other words, the federal government trusts the PURP,” he said. “The recertification once again reinforces the level of quality and thoroughness of the education that we provide our students in computer science and computer engineering at both the undergraduate and graduate levels of study.”

The PURP, represented by Dr. Alfredo Cruz, will receive the certification at the 19th Colloquium for Information Security Education, to be held on June 15-17 in Las Vegas. Founded in 1966, the PURP is the largest private engineering school in the U.S. and the largest private Hispanic-serving institution in the mainland U.S. to hold that market. The timing is right, the growth of the market is right, and we have significant relationships with some of the companies that are in the business of reducing their own internal networks,” Scandura said. He added that the consolidation of pharmaceutical companies stimulates this type of manufacturing, as consolidated operations strive to shed excess capacity and lower costs.

Founded in 1996, AIAC’s total annual revenues exceed $1 billion. AIAC’s companies manufacture precision products and equipment for a wide variety of end markets, including food, pharmaceutical, petrochemical, aerospace, defense, appliances, automotive, rail, refrigeration, construction and medical devices.

Recently, the Food & Drug Administration has put more emphasis on compliance, the executive explained. Guaranteeing quality is a key piece in this type of manufacturing since the consequences of errors in the manufacturing process are detrimental. Puerto Rico is a model in this area because of its excellent quality record. Scandura added that contract-manufacturing agreements tend to be long term, as the value of this plant versus others,” he added.

“The people in the Arcibo plant, we believe are the very backbone of our offering. They are highly competent, highly educated and very motivated people.”

-Jim Scandura, COO of AIAC International Pharma