

Protesters decry cuts to Puerto Rico University

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San Juan, Puerto Rico, May 14 (UPI) - A massive demonstration protesting budget cuts to Puerto Rico's state university filled a Capitol plaza in San Juan.

Thousands of people enrolled or employed at Puerto Rico University (UPR) met at the Capitol building and marched to the home of the U.S. commonwealth's chief executive Wednesday. The government has threatened a 20 percent budget cut to the university.

Julio Muriente, leader of the pro-independence Hostosian National Independence Movement, attended the demonstration, saying, "We want people to know the importance of the university for the country, the value of the UPR, and this event is proof of what the institution is."

Puerto Rico has \$73 billion in outstanding public debt and an economy slowed by the phase-out of tax incentives to bring U.S. industry to the island. Last week Gov. Alejandro Garcia Padilla warned it could run out of money by September unless other funding was found.