



## **Ecuador Higher Education Study Tour May 30 – June 9, 2018**

**EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION RATES (February 15, 2018)**

**Study Tour Fee (Faculty and Administrators): \$2,500  
Study Tour Fee (Graduate Student): \$2,200**

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## What is the Ecuador Study Tour?

Summer 2018 brings to our participants our 6<sup>th</sup> annual higher education study tour. This 11 day academic tour examines the major facets of the Ecuadorian system of higher education in the XXI century. Through lectures by local experts, site visits, and the opportunity to be immersed in the local culture, participants will obtain a better grasp of the reality of this Andean country and its educational system. This study tour hopes to bring together a group of colleagues from several institutions and is centered on comparing and contrasting higher education in Ecuador and the U.S. This year the theme of the study tour is: "Global Citizenship: The Role of Education in Ecuador. This study tour will examine the experiences of local students, faculty, and staff enrolled and working in K-12 and Higher Education institutions.

## Where is the tour taking place?

On the imaginary line that divides the globe into North and South, Ecuador stands as one of only 17 countries on earth considered as mega-diverse. Ecuador is "home to about 3,300 species of orchids, more than 1,500 species of birds, 350 species of reptiles, 450 species of amphibians, and more than 20,000 vascular plants" This diversity is also reflected on its people, with an ethnically mixed population representing Spanish and indigenous roots. Ecuador is one of the smallest countries in South America and lies 9,000 feet above sea level. Quito, our host city, is the capital of Ecuador. Quito was the first city named by UNESCO a "world heritage" city in 1978, and recently was named "cultural capital" of Latin America.



With a population of 2.4 million, Quito offers one of the best preserved colonial centers in the world, combining a rich history with a contemporary metropolitan image. **National Geographic named Quito one of the top 10 places to visit in the world.** The study tour offers several excursions including a visit to Quito's famous colonial center, a day to relax in Papallacta Hot Springs, the opportunity to visit the center of the world, and a visit to the pristine rainforest (A complete itinerary will be shared with each participant)

## Why to explore K-12 and Higher Education in Ecuador?

Today, Ecuador's government seeks to move forward in a globalized world that places great value on developing citizens capable of competing on this knowledge economy. At the center of this process, Ecuador's government has turned their attention to a major overhauling of the country's troubled higher-education system and views higher education reform as a "prerequisite to development" At the present time, major changes are taking place in the areas of teaching, student access, accountability, and finances. As stated by the President of Ecuador, Rafael Correa (Ph.D. in economics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), these changes are imperative, and "If we don't change higher education, the country won't move forward" (Lloyd, 2010)



## What are the study tour dates?

The study tour dates are: May 30 – June 9, 2018. Participants must arrive to Quito on the evening of May 30 and depart on the evening of June 9. All participants must coordinate travel arrangements with us prior booking.

## Group Size? Who usually goes on this trip?

Our study tour invites current or retired teachers, faculty and/or administrators, graduate students at two or four-year institutions, or professionals with an interest in higher education. Participants do not need to be experts on the study tour topic or region. Our study tour is designed to serve individuals interested in examining issues in higher education from an interdisciplinary perspective. The study tour will accept a maximum of 13 participants. Participants come at different stages in their career (junior, senior, emeritus) and with a diverse set of experiences and backgrounds. Likewise, participants represent many institutions across the country. A few of the institutions represented by past participants in our study tour include:

Buffalo State University	Higher Learning Commission	NorthWest Missouri State
Baruch College	Georgia Southern University	University of Oklahoma
Boston College	University of Minnesota	University of St. Thomas
University of Denver	University of Michigan	University of Richmond
Fresno State University	Eastern Michigan University	Cardinal Stritch University
U. of California – Long Beach	Michigan State University	Rutgers University
Columbia University	Northeastern University	UW-Madison
University of Florida	University of Texas – El Paso	NYU

## Can I invite friends or colleagues from other states to join me?

Yes, this tour is open to all participants with an interest in exploring educational reform in Ecuador. We will help participants coordinate flight details to enjoy this tour. Based on a case by case scenario, participants can also travel with partners and other individuals interested in the tour.

## What can we expect from our accommodations?

Participants will have the unique opportunity to spend time with a local family that manages the residence where we will stay. This is a fully furnished 4 level apartment style accommodations. These modern apartments have been carefully decorated and offer amenities such as a living room, dining room, and kitchen space to help you relax and enjoy your visit. We believe it is essential to provide not only comfort and safety, but also a special insight to the local culture. That is why we keep our tour size to a maximum of 13 participants and offer a smaller intimate property for our guests to truly make this visit a unique experience for each visitor. Our staff will make sure you have a pleasant experience offering support 24/7. Program Fee: **Based on double room accommodations with a roommate and one private bathroom.** Roommate assignments can be requested. Otherwise, they will be made based on participant's professional background, interest, institution, travel experience. In the past, this has allowed participants to build strong friendships and professional relationships.

## What are the Potential Study Tour Outcomes for Individuals and Institutions?

My Ecuador Trip believes that international educational opportunities are central to the development of professionals, in particular those who interact and serve students. Our program is designed to:

- Enlarge the number of graduate students, faculty and staff who have exposure to international issues
- Encourage participants to consider different ideas and perspectives, and reflect upon personal beliefs in the context of a new country and culture
- Present your work and research at a local institution
- Provide participants with opportunities to explore issues from a multitude of perspectives with colleagues from different institutions



- Expose participants to ideas, research, collaboration opportunities, and other environments where creativity and innovation are fostered
- Examine ideas to internationalize the curriculum
- Encourages thoughtful intellectual exchanges focusing on student affairs and higher education;
- Discuss opportunities to organize short term study abroad or service learning trips
- Share experience with the local campus and community
- Opportunities to conduct research abroad
- Use analytical skills to examine topics discussed

### What themes will be explored in relation to the system of education in Ecuador?

- Identify characteristics defining the experiences of students in colleges and universities in Ecuador
- Explore notions of student success in Ecuador
- Compare and contrast how different types of institutions operate in Ecuador
- Analyze the current reform and re-accreditation process in Ecuador
- Analyze and synthesize information from diverse sources and incorporate them into their understanding of a new culture
- Gain exposure to current issues, populations served, operational units, history, and other aspects relevant to the evolution of higher education in Ecuador
- Draw comparisons to the work/life balance for staff and faculty currently working in educational institutions in Ecuador

### How is the study tour structured? What about lectures or discussion?

The study tour will be structured in three main parts:

- General Overview of Higher Education in Ecuador
- Higher Education Reform: Current Challenges and Opportunities
- Opportunities to learn about the local culture and region

Our study tour will explore these two main areas through a series of lectures lead by local faculty, administrators, experts from public and private institutions in the country, and locals. Each session will be conducted in English (or with translation) and is followed by discussion. Dr. Raul Leon will be the study tour leader.

### Can I sign up for academic credit for the study tour?

Yes, participants have received academic credit (independent study) for participation in this study tour. They coordinated this credit prior departure and paid fees for tuition to their home institution. Dr. Leon will be happy to provide you with a sample syllabus or projects to complete during the study tour.

### How can I finance this trip and obtain funding from my institution?

In past tours, most participants (students, staff, and faculty) have secured funding to partially or completely cover the expenses of the tour. Participants were proactive seeking resources and started with the planning process early to request and secure funding. Participant reported the following strategies to obtain funding:

- Connect with your department chair or dean to discuss campus internationalization initiatives
- Use professional development funds from your department or school
- Discuss how this tour could help you revamp curriculum on your department
- Discuss your role supporting the creation or partnership for new study abroad programs
- Search scholarships designed for research, international travel, or international immersion
- Commit to share your experience back on campus when you return

## Study Tour Leadership

Dr. Raul Leon is an Associate Professor of Higher Education and Student Affairs at Eastern Michigan University. Born and raised in Ecuador, Dr. Leon has a passion for traveling and discovering new places. Dr. Leon earned his B.A. in International Relations from St. Cloud State University (SCSU). He also holds a master's degree in International Public Affairs (International Development in Latin America) and a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, both degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.



Dr. Leon has several years of experience working closely with international education programs and initiatives. These experiences include working with the Center for International Studies at SCSCU, developing marketing campaigns for over 100 study abroad programs with the University of Wisconsin-Madison, building strong relationships between international students and the campus community with International Reach, and serving as a program coordinator for the International Learning Community with University Housing.

In addition to these experiences at the university level, Dr. Leon is a native from Ecuador and has provided leadership for My Ecuador Trip, organizing and leading educational and cultural trips. Aligned with his professional interests, in 2012, Dr. Leon co-organized an international colloquium at the University of Leeds (U.K.) focusing on the experiences of males of color across the globe. During 2012, Dr. Leon was also invited by the Universidad Catolica de Concepcion (Chile) to conduct a workshop for over 250 students, faculty, and administrators, examining current higher education challenges and opportunities in the United States. Dr. Leon has organized several educational tours to Ecuador and is eager to lead our 6<sup>th</sup> Study Tour in Ecuador

## Academic Site Visits

The main goal for our international study tour is to expose graduate students, faculty and administrators to the general characteristics of higher education in Ecuador. Our study tour offers participants the opportunity to visit local institutions of higher education, participate in lectures and discussion, and attend events aligned with the main theme of the study tour. Highlights from our past study tours include visits to:

- Visits to local schools and universities
- Discussions with local professors, scholars, and administrators
- Visits to the Department of Education and Government Officials
- Meetings with local student representatives
- Guided tours of local High Schools and meetings with K-12 administrators
- Learning about life and culture in Quito through seminars and presentations

## Does the study tour incorporate time to explore our host city?

Our study tours are carefully designed to offer participants the opportunity to explore Quito and familiarize with the local culture. All daily excursions are carefully designed and make up an itinerary that is fun, enriching, and safe. A staff member from My Ecuador Trip will serve as a group leader and will guide the group through their journey. Transportation is provided for every tour. Some of the unique destinations for our study tour include:

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| ♣ Indigenous Craft Market    | ♣ Middle of the World & Pululahua Crater |
| ♣ Colonial Cathedrals        | ♣ Sky-Lift Ride at 13,000 ft             |
| ♣ Rain Forest and Waterfalls | ♣ Ecuadorian Cultural House              |
| ♣ Hot Springs                | ♣ Guayasamin Museum                      |

## What is the degree of difficulty for the activities organized? Are we Walking?

**Academic Site Visits:** For academic site visits participants should be prepared for walking and or standing for some periods of time. Some days there will be no walking and other days walking time may exceed 1-2 hours (broken up into shorter blocks). There are many occasions when we are not walking consistently but we are on our feet for several hours over the course of the day. For instance, when we make site visits, we may have to stand up to listen to a speaker. This standing could be interspersed with short walks as we tour institutions or visit the rain forest for and scheduled activity.

**Excursions and Tours.** Our tours involve moderate hikes in the city, rainforests, plains, and national parks. Our tour involves getting out of vehicles, walking on uneven terrain, and in some cases hiking in places with high elevation and some humidity. Our tours are suited for anyone who can walk up to 2-5 km (1.5 - 3 miles) per day. In the past, we have welcomed participants with different medical conditions and abilities. Please send us an email if you would like to find out more information about the level of activity for each tour and accommodations.



## What is the cost of the study tour and what is included?

Please refer to faculty or graduate student rates accordingly. **Ecuador's currency is the U.S. dollar.**

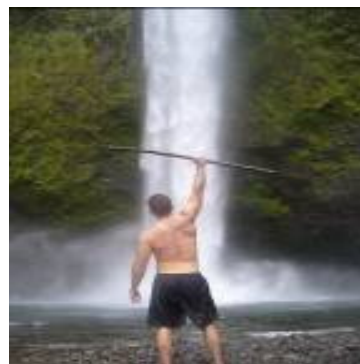
## What is included in the tour fee?

- ✓ Fully Furnished Accommodations (Fee: Double Room Accommodations)
- ✓ All Meals (Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner)
- ✓ Academic Seminar (Lectures, Site Visits, Tours, Materials)
- ✓ Guided Excursions
- ✓ Transfer from and to airport in Quito (With Group)
- ✓ Entrance Fee for Local Attractions Included in Itinerary
- ✓ Pre-departure information and Staff Assistance
- ✓ Bottled Water for Full Trip
- ✓ Free Internet



## What is not included in the study tour fee?

- ✗ International Airfare
- ✗ Additional Snacks and Meals not Included in Itinerary
- ✗ Additional Transportation Services not Included in Itinerary
- ✗ Souvenirs and Miscellaneous
- ✗ Tipping and Gratuities (Under \$40 per person for entire trip)
- ✗ Beverages and Alcoholic Drinks
- ✗ Travel and Medical Emergency Insurance (Price Range: \$30-70)



## What about my airfare?

Airfare is not included on the price of this tour. Because our participants come from many different places, you will book your ticket from the location is most convenient to you. For instance, several of our participants book round trip tickets to Quito from Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Chicago, Detroit, or New York. Price ranges between \$750 – 1100. Most participants will flight directly to Quito from ATLANTA or MIAMI after their first connection (Quito is only a 4 h flight from those cities).

## What is the estimated total budget for the study tour?

ESTIMATED BUDGET	Faculty/Administrator /Professional	Graduate Student
<b>Study Tour Fee</b>	<b>\$2,700</b>	<b>\$2,400</b>
<b>(EARLY BIRD: Feb. 15)</b>	<b>(EARLY BIRD: \$2,500)</b>	<b>(EARLY BIRD: \$2,200)</b>
Roundtrip Airfare (Calculated from Washington DC)	\$750	\$750
Extra Cash	\$150	\$150
Medical Travel Insurance Coverage	\$50	\$50
<b>*TOTAL COST</b>	<b>\$ 3,450</b>	<b>\$ 3,150</b>

**\*Accommodations:** Tour Fee based on double room accommodations with shared bathroom. If you would like a private room, please request this in advance. Additional fees apply.

a) Each double room has one bathroom

b) Traveling with a colleague: You can both select to room together in a double room with a private bathroom.

c) We recommend you have extra cash to cover additional expenses not included in our tour. Past participants report spending between \$100 - 150 (i.e., souvenirs, tips, alcoholic drinks, miscellaneous)

d) TOTAL cost shown based on early bird registration of February 15.

## Do you need medical / travel insurance for this trip?

All participants must secure medical travel insurance coverage PRIOR the trip. This insurance should cover you for the entire duration of the trip. Many participants may already be covered by a medical insurance policy. If this is the case, please contact and check the insurance policy to ensure it includes overseas coverage. If you do not have insurance, you are required to obtain travel/trip cancellation insurance that **includes** medical coverage. All participants must present proof of insurance in writing prior departure.

## How and when should I reserve a spot for the Study Tour?

The study tour is based on a minimum number of participants enrolled (minimum: 6 participants - maximum 13). We recommend that you reserve your spot for the study tour as soon as you are ready to commit since there is limited space available. Our deadline to confirm the trip with the minimum number of participants required is **April 1**. All applications must be submitted with the \$300 registration deposit. Refer to installments dates for all payments. In the past, we have been successful at securing participants before the deadline.

With prior approval, anyone registered but who cannot attend may send a substitute. Substitution information must come in writing from the registered participant by April 15. The membership status of the substitute must

be the same as the registrant in order to have the same registration fee applied. Additional charges may apply if the membership status is not the same.

## Payment Plans?

The payment schedule below allows participants to pay in several installments. We will confirm the study tour by **April 1**. After receiving confirmation, you will be able to book your airfare. **DO NOT** purchase a ticket without confirmation in writing from My Ecuador Trip. You may also pay the full amount at once.

<b>Installment Date</b>	<b>Installment Amount (Faculty/ Administrator)</b>	<b>Installment Amount (Graduate Student)</b>
<b>April 1 (Application Deposit)</b>	\$300	\$300
<b>April 15</b>	\$1,200	\$1,000
<b>May 1</b>	\$1,200	\$1,100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,700</b>	<b>\$2,400</b>

**\*February 15:** Early Bird Registration Discount (\$200) will be applied to May 1 payment. (Faculty/Administrator: \$1,000 ; Graduate Student: \$900)

## What is your cancellation policy?

### Participant Cancellation:

Cancellation Policy: Refunds will be given for cancellations received in writing 60 days before the trip date minus a \$300 processing fee. If you decide to cancel your participation in the study tour 60 to 30 days before for any reason, we will refund 50% of your total payments (not including \$300 processing fee). Cancellations under 30 days before the trip dates will not be entitled to any refunds. No partial refunds are given for unused meals, hotel rooms, airport transfers, or other program activities, for any reason whatsoever. All requests for cancellation and refunds must be in writing to myecuadortrip2010@gmail.com.

Cancellations under 30 days are eligible for credit for a future tour (travel or study tour) minus the \$300 application fee and any other expenses inquired by My Ecuador Trip. If credit is used, this tour must be booked within one year after the original tour date. No refunds will be given if the tour is not booked within that time frame. My Ecuador Trip will have no further liability with the participant.

### Tour Cancellation:

The Study Tour may be cancelled or postponed due to unforeseen circumstances by My Ecuador Trip. In this case My Ecuador Trip will refund all study tour fees and has no further liability to the participant. My Ecuador Trip will not be responsible for additional costs, charges, or expenses, including cancellation/change charges assessed by airlines, travel insurance, and/or travel agencies. Please note that under no circumstances My Ecuador Trip is responsible for any flight cancellation or flight change charges incurred. My Ecuador Trip is not responsible for weather or travel-related problems and will not reimburse registration fees for these issues. We would like to mention that we have never cancelled a trip.

### Travel Warning Cancellation



In case of an act of war, terrorism, or the threat of an act of terrorism. Participants will receive a full refund (less the \$300 processing fee that will be applied for a future trip) should all of the following conditions be met: (a) a terrorist act, or threats of terrorist acts occur(s), which is directed against U.S. interests on U.S. soil or in U.S. airspace or directed against U.S. interests in any other country or in international airspace; and (b) as a result of these events, a formal Travel Warning is issued by the U.S. Department of State, stating that Americans should not travel to Ecuador ad any other country or countries that are included in the participant's tour itinerary; and (c) the formal Travel Warning by the U.S. Department of State is issued within 30 days of the participant's departure.

### Do you need vaccinations prior traveling to Ecuador?

All our programs take place in locations where no vaccinations are needed. These areas have no risk of malaria or yellow fever.

### Do you need a visa to visit Ecuador?

At the present time, U.S. citizens do not need a visa to travel to Ecuador for a period shorter than 90 days. If you are **not a U.S. citizen**, you must check with your own government agency and/or the consulates of all countries visited for entry and visa requirements for your nationality.

### Study tour itinerary?

Each participant will receive a detailed itinerary closer to the trip's dates. Each participant will also receive a detailed list of how to prepare, packing, and other pertaining information.

### Do you have additional questions?

Please contact us if you have any additional questions or would like to discuss tour details.



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