

2019 FEATURED LACS STUDENT ORGANIZATION

THE QUITO PROJECT

A special spotlight feature written by **Nick Farrugia** and **Katie Ortiz-Tenesaca**, LACS Administrative Assistants

Nick Farrugia is a microbiology and art & design student at the University of Michigan, class of 2020. He is also the 2018-2019 co-director of outreach and recruitment for the Quito Project.

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The Quito Project (TQP) is a multidisciplinary organization that provides summer tutoring programs in math, reading comprehension, English, and leadership to primary school students in Quito, Ecuador.

TQP's education component is a student initiative from the University of Michigan and Universidad de San Francisco de Quito which began in 2014. The Quito Project is currently partnering with Caritas Primavera, a non-profit organization in Cumbaya, Ecuador that works to help the surrounding lower socio-economic communities by providing programs and resources for those in need. Through this partnership, TQP is able to carry out its summer educational program which works to minimize the achievement gap in low income neighborhoods by working with local communities and promoting global collaboration through education. The curriculum is student-developed by our undergraduate tutors with support from mentor faculty members and emphasizes strengthening students' understanding of core academic subjects in reading, writing, mathematics and the sciences while encouraging creative expression and exploration, elevating the importance of academic performance, and boosting in-class self-confidence.



ALANA RODRIGUEZ
LACS Academic Specialist;
and TQP Faculty Advisor

message FROM THE ADVISOR

I cannot emphasize enough how The Quito Project, a U-M student-led organization, truly stands out among the many on campus. The Quito Project has excelled for 14 years, but in the last year it demonstrated incredible growth and became a leader on campus in terms of its commitment to sustainable and culturally sensitive practices abroad.

TQP students make a big impact in the communities in which they work and strive to ensure that this impact is a positive one. Many service-oriented projects abroad under prepare students to be cross-culturally competent and aware of the larger global context in which their project fits, which can lead to potentially exploitative situations in which receiving communities do not always benefit as intended. Recognizing this, TQP has created two wonderful initiatives that serve the university community:

“Breaking the Barriers of Voluntourism” Event Series

This event series is part of TQP’s initiative to hold pre- and post-travel workshops, seminars, and discussion sessions on campus that provide training and spaces for reflection on these important themes and is a crucial part of responsible service learning. TQP actively seeks out other student organizations and campus units that send students abroad so that all students can benefit from TQP’s model.

Over the past few years, TQP has coordinated and executed well-attended and highly successful workshops for other students and student organizations as part of their “Breaking the Barriers of Voluntourism” series. These biannual workshops focus on themes such as teaching in a foreign classroom, sustainable and respectful cultural humility practices while abroad, ethical voluntourism, and more.

Council of Global Student Organizations (CGSO)

The most impressive achievement of TQP is certainly their creation of an umbrella organization for all U-M student groups (SSOs and VSOs) that go abroad as part of their activities. Realizing that the gaps in their knowledge in terms of responsible and ethical behaviors in cross-cultural settings as well as in terms of accessing resources on campus for international travel were probably widespread, they took the initiative to create this council that brings together other globally-minded student organizations.

CGSO exists to connect these groups in order to network, discuss challenges, share best practices, and access resources on campus. CGSO, while the brainchild of TQP, has the benefit of dedicated staff support from the Provost’s Office, Ross Global Initiatives, and the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, which means its members have a direct connection to campus resources already built in. Within one month of its pilot creation, seven organizations joined the council and CGSO officially launched on February 6, 2019.

U-M owes a debt of gratitude to TQP for this work. When U-M students and student organizations go abroad, they are representing our campus and culture, and I am so impressed by how TQP has taken these concrete steps to ensure they are doing so safely, ethically, and responsibly. I commend TQP for their admirable commitment to this cause. Not only did they find solutions for the challenges they experience abroad, but they went many steps further and found real ways to share their solutions with others.

the quito project ON CAMPUS

In addition to their work in Ecuador, The Quito Project has established a pen-pal program between students from their summer education program in Quito, Ecuador, and students in Spanish classes from various local middle schools in Ann Arbor. During the summer of 2018, students in Spanish classes from Slauson Middle School and Scarlett Middle School participated in the program, which featured a presentation about Ecuadorian culture and society as well as an overview of the TQP program. In recent sessions, Co-President, Marina Ross explains:

“We have focused more on creating awareness here in Ann Arbor that Spanish is not the native or the only official language of Ecuador and many other countries in Latin America. We talk to the students about Quechua and other indigenous languages and people since many of them are unaware that these indigenous populations exist in the first place.”

The workshop culminated with Ann Arbor students writing letters in Spanish to the students at TQP school program in Ecuador giving an inside view into their lives, who they are, and the things they enjoy. In exchange, during the 2018 summer camp in Quito, the Ecuadorian students wrote back letters containing similar topics in regards to their own lives. One of the program goals is to show students how they can apply their Spanish language skills to the real world. Additionally, TQP hopes this program can help to break down some of the preconceived notions that many local students may have about students from other countries. The program spreads cultural awareness and improves foreign language competency for local students which ultimately helps to foster international connections - connections that wouldn't exist without the knowledge of foreign language and cultures in the first place.

Only a couple of months after returning from Quito, Ecuador in 2018 the tutors and remaining members of TQP found out about a wonderful local literacy and culture project titled *En Nuestra Lengua*, directed by U-M faculty member Professor Teresa Satterfield. This program aims to develop academic skills in Spanish by offering Saturday morning classes for bilingual children from Grade pre-K through 4 at Bach School in Ann Arbor, Michigan throughout the school year. The Quito Project provided support for 3 consecutive weeks assisting the teachers in setting up their classrooms and helping the students find their classrooms, ensuring a smooth procession of the program at the beginning of the year.



Letters written for students in TQP Summer Program in Quito for the summer of 2019



Classroom of students participating in *En Nuestra Lengua*. Photo courtesy of *En Nuestra Lengua*.

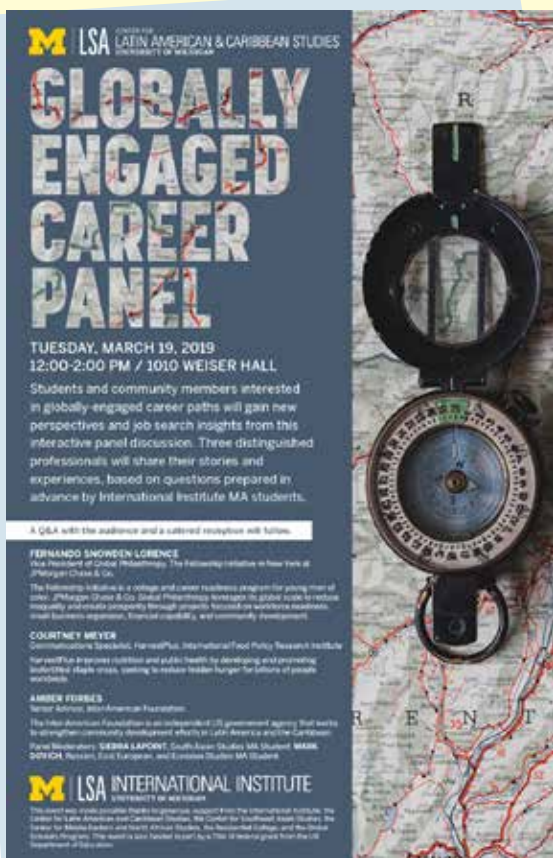


Fernando Snowden-Lorence



Amber Forbes

TQP works on both mentoring within the organization as well as seeking mentors from outside campus. This year, they worked with Alana Rodriguez, program specialist at the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies and TQP advisor, to plan a networking dinner with two professionals who have globally-minded careers to talk about how one pursues and international career path. The invited guests were Fernando Snowden-Lorence, Vice President of Global Philanthropy at JPMorgan Chase & Co. and Amber Forbes, Senior Advisor at the Inter-American Foundation. Ms. Forbes is also a U-M and TQP alum which was an extra special treat. This dinner was open just to TQP students and provided a wonderful opportunity to learn about how these professionals got to the top of their fields.



“At first, I wasn’t sure attending the workshop would be extremely pertinent to my own career trajectory because it was focused around internationally-centered career paths. But after having gone, I realized I would’ve missed out on one of the greatest developmental opportunities allowed to me. Both Fernando and Amber spoke about their experiences post-grad and the channels of work they had to go through before ending up where they are today. It was a nice reminder that everything is a journey and that the work we’re doing right here, right now is critical to our growth as not only students but individuals. They both reminded me that sticking to one’s core values and morals is what drives true innovation, and being able to do so internationally is difficult but that’s what TQP does! We stick to our passion for equal access to education and although our work is focused on students abroad, we continue to challenge ourselves to be agents of change on our own campus.

— Katie Ortiz-Tenesaca



TQP members pictured at networking dinner with Fernando Snowden-Lawrence and Amber Forbes

Council of Global Student Organizations (CGSO)

The most impressive achievement of TQP this year is their creation of an umbrella organization for all U-M student groups (SSOs and VSOs) that go abroad as part of their activities. Realizing that the gaps in their knowledge in terms of responsible and ethical behaviors in cross-cultural settings as well as in terms of accessing resources on campus for international travel were probably widespread, they took the initiative to create the Council of Global Student Organizations (CGSO), to bring together other globally-minded student organizations. CGSO exists to connect these groups in order to network, discuss challenges, share best practices, and access resources on campus. CGSO, while the brainchild of TQP, has the benefit of dedicated staff support from the Provost's Office, Ross Global Initiatives, and the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, which means its members have a direct connection to campus resources already built in. Within one month of its pilot creation, seven organizations joined the council and CGSO officially launched on February 6, 2019.

CGSO is currently in the process of creating an advisory board made up of U-M staff and students that will administer the group in years to come. The organization will be sponsored by the Global Engagement, housed in the Provost's Office. It is a true testament to the need for and the importance of this initiative that the Provost's Office showed immediate interest in providing a space and resources for the organization

For more info, visit CGSO's:

Facebook: bit.ly/2WKmSck or webpage: bit.ly/2XJhbs8



Breaking the Barriers of Voluntourism



Danyelle J Reynolds presenting at the "Breaking the Barriers of Voluntourism" in February, 2019

The Quito Project held their annual two part workshop series titled, "Breaking the Barriers of Voluntourism" to provide students going abroad with the necessary tools to be informed, respectful and responsible tourists and service members. Danyelle J Reynolds, assistant director for student learning and leadership at the Ginsberg Center, began the second installment of the two-part workshop on the night of February 13th with an important discussion. She started with the question, "What is Voluntourism?" in which she answered, "...is a conscious, seamlessly integrated combination of voluntary service to a destination and the best, traditional elements of travel—arts, culture, geography, history and recreation—in that destination." This idea is ever-important for travelling students, especially those involved in The Quito Project. As a student from a prestigious university such as U-M entering a foreign country with a foundation of different social, cultural, and political beliefs, assuming the role of a tutor and/or teacher can be a controversial position. Danyelle addressed this as the crux of being a good service member abroad. The workshop shed light on how to best overcome the common barriers of being a voluntourist, which include: "Not considering our identities or roles", and "Not understanding the Issue and Context" among others. Darius Moore, a



Tutors, Valeria Alban (USFQ) and Zack Safadi (U-M), working with their students during TQP Summer Program, 2018

U-M student who will be travelling to Quito as a tutor this coming summer 2019 shared, “The Breaking Barriers of Voluntourism has prepared me for my trip to Quito by helping me to acknowledge and be aware of cultural and socioeconomic misunderstandings that could happen when engaging with a community abroad. The workshop really brought to light the many ways that a community’s needs and concerns can be overlooked when engaging with a service group from abroad and how it is the responsibility of all to make sure that the cultural and socioeconomic dignity of the of the receiving population is maintained and prioritized at all times. Also, the workshop helped me become aware of the fact that my own identities play a role in how a community engages with me and that I need to be cognizant of myself when entering another space as to not offend others or create strife between groups.”

Those attending the workshop participated in group activities and problem-solving situations related to being a successful instructor in a foreign and/or developing nation. Students walked away with novel learning goals and employable tools to make them better travellers abroad.

“I cried on the last day of camp. “¿Por qué estás triste?” Karol, a five-year-old student, asked me. I smiled through my tears. “Porque es el último día, y no voy a verte nunca más después de esto.” She kissed me on the cheek, and I felt the bittersweet end of the challenging, frustrating, rewarding, heart-full-of-love three weeks that we had spent, tutors and kids alike, working and growing together. I’ve always known that I’m not a people person and that all I want to do with life is to work with animals and not talk to humans ever again, but being a part of something as special as TQP made me realize that humans have the ability to come together with differences but still appreciate what we can do and make together. TQP helped me discover an ineffable emotion inside me that actually appreciates the days spent chasing after kids who don’t listen and the frustrating hours spent trying to teach the complexities of English grammar, that wishes everyone could have the chance to experience the world through different cultural lenses and perspectives, especially those from a child’s eyes. And in the future, when I’m off chasing some elusive animal in the jungle far, far away from human contact, I know I will be grateful for the chance TQP gave me to connect with the kids in Quito all those summers ago, no matter how far apart we may be.

— Nora Kuo, TQP Co-President

“Coming into The Quito Project I didn’t really know what to expect. All I knew was that I was super excited to be able to visit Ecuador and help teach a group of kids. I wasn’t aware of the rewarding challenges I’d face while down there. Personally, I’ve never been out of the country and I definitely suffered from homesickness at times, but my Quito Project friends quickly made Ecuador feel like home. The support system we built for one another was so quick and close-knit that I knew we’d remain friends for the years to come. Because we got along so well, the camp became easier to handle. We all helped each other if we needed advice on a lesson or how to approach one of the students that was having a hard time. I’ve never met a group of more genuine and loving kids. The last day of camp was hard. You say goodbye to them and you realize you’ve already become attached. But you’re left with a comfort that this program will keep on going and more and more kids will get to experience something as amazing as this!

— Katie Ortiz, TQP Co-Director of Finance

“It begins with a basic understanding of the environment you are entering - educating yourself on the people, their practices, and general manners is a great start. From there, establishing goals, learning objectives and creating a constructive, open discourse with those you’re teaching and/or learning with creates a more productive environment.

— Francesca Romano (Class of 2021).
Architecture, Art & Design; TQP Co-Director of Volunteering, 2018-2019

tqp advisor

ACHIEVEMENTS

On April 13, 2019, The Quito Project Faculty Advisor Alana Rodriguez was honored by the University of Michigan's Beta Eta chapter of the Chi Upsilon Sigma Latin Sorority, Inc. to serve as the keynote speaker at their annual Founders Ball. Alana spoke about the work she does at the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies as well as with The Quito Project to increase access to quality educational opportunities for under-resourced or historically underrepresented communities.

LACS staff member Alana Rodriguez receives LSA Rising Star Award for the Humanities division”

The LSA Rising Star Award is bestowed upon a staff member with less than 3-years of experience working in the department to acknowledge all that they have contributed to the LACS department and University. Alana's service to LACS goes far beyond the responsibilities of the job title as she continues to head the department's annual symposium hosted at the University of Puerto Rico. In addition to this, Alana has managed to present her own research on Cuba to UM alumni in Havana, and continued to uphold collaborative projects with partners in San Diego and Tijuana revolving around the development of a cross-border teaching program focused on global migration. Countless hours travelling abroad spent organizing national/international speakers, and various conferences and events is trumped only by her impressive understanding of the grant system, and her exceptional grant writing skills. Alana, despite the difficult competition, was successful in securing nearly two million dollars in grant funding for LACS in 2018 from the Tinker Foundation, The II, Rackham Graduate School, and a significant sum from the Department of Education, Title VI. Alana's own dedication to The Quito Project and its vision is just another example of why she is deserving of the award. The Quito Project, LACS Department, and the University as a whole owe many thanks to Alana Rodriguez - Alana was formally honored at an awards ceremony on May 23, 2019 at Rackham Auditorium.



TQP Advisor, Alana Rodriguez, pictured with TQP tutor, Amy Muñoz, during her honorary speech for U-M Chi Upsilon Sigma Latin Sorority

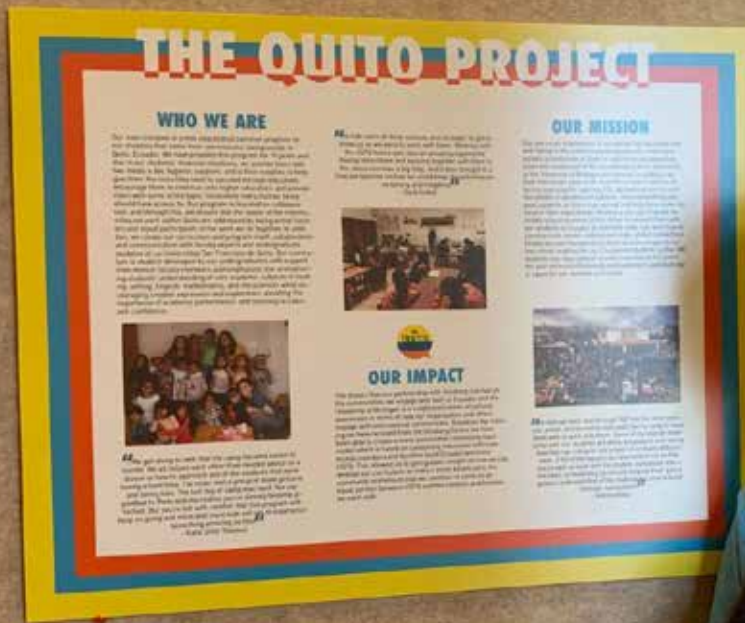


Alana Rodriguez pictured with a member of the UofM Chi Upsilon Sigma Latin Sorority



Alana Rodriguez receives Rising Star Award for the Humanities division at LSA's Annual Staff Achievement Awards ceremony

opportunities THROUGH FUNDING



Co-President Marina Ross pictured next to TQP poster presented at the Ginsberg Community Engagement Grant Awards Event

The Quito Project, beyond various student-led fundraising events, owes much of their program and event funding to the Language Resource Center (LRC), the Office of Academic Multicultural Initiatives (OAMI), and the Ginsberg Center. LRC and OAMI are both collaborative centers and initiatives at U-M that support campus partners involved in cultural and lingual studies. This past 2018-2019 academic year, The Quito Project received funding from both LRC and OAMI to help offset the costs of organizing their travel workshops, “Breaking the Barriers of Voluntourism,” providing ample resources for the two-hour workshop, as well as catering for those in attendance. In addition to this, TQP was awarded the Ginsberg Community Engagement grant from the Ginsberg Center. This grant looks to uphold their mission in ‘advancing social change for the public good by cultivating and stewarding mutually beneficial partnerships between communities and U-M.’ The upcoming

2019 Summer Program in Quito was made possible through this grant as the funds go directly towards equipping the program with supplies, food and all necessary resources. This summer, these funds will specifically go towards providing the tutors with the resources to run a classroom for the program duration as well as provide healthy food options for all of the participating students and tutors in the program. The remainder of the grant money will also go towards an educational field-trip to promote classroom curriculum.

In the past years, financial burdens have been a barrier for potential tutors, especially those from underrepresented socioeconomic backgrounds, to fully commit to The Quito Project and its traveling component. In order to facilitate this process, Finance Directors of TQP prepared a spreadsheet of potential U-M and non-UM scholarships to which the incoming tutors could apply. This spreadsheet included a description of the scholarship, the

award amount and specific deadlines or criteria the students must meet. TQP doesn't partner with CGIS (Center for Global and Intercultural Study) or GIEU (Global Intercultural Experience for Undergraduates), two U-M departments that provide ample resources for specifically designed education-based travel programs. As a result, students looking to participate in TQP must seek scholarship opportunities outside of these two large funding programs. In addition to this, many of the remaining study-abroad scholarships require specific program durations, and class credit equivalencies, both of which TQP has trouble fulfilling as a service project. However, TQP board members have done substantial work to provide their tutors with a number of available scholarships that can be capitalized on for individual program funding. They understand that it can be difficult to find scholarships that are applicable to a volunteering experience and this has proven extremely rewarding in reducing angst and stress in tutors anticipating their travel abroad.

The Quito Project Received Global Impact Group Award

M-Lead is a Student Leadership organization at the University of Michigan which holds the MDSL Awards every year to recognize student leaders on campus that focus on making local and global change, nominated by their peers, faculty and staff on campus. This past academic year (2018-2019), The Quito Project was presented the Global Impact Group Award, an award which acknowledges and endorses their mission to minimize the education gap for students in low opportunity areas through education.



Students from TQP's 2018 Summer Program pictured at a local farm and petting zoo on a field trip



Co-Presidents Nora Kuo and Marina Ross accepting the Global Impact Group Award

preparation FOR SUMMER 2019

After a successful academic year garnering support and new tutors, attaining new partnerships and funding and spreading word on campus, The Quito Project and its new tutors prepare and finalize the details of their 2019 Summer Education Program in Quito, Ecuador. This process primarily involves communication between the tutors from the University of Michigan and the University of San Francisco de Quito. Through skype calls, these students develop preliminary lesson plans and finalize the details of their program, be it for student transportation or for local field trips. The Quito Project being a group of diverse individuals from all different paths and disciplines finds strength in their leadership and collectivism. Although the tutors from previous years are often unable to join the summer program in Quito for a second year, they provide their support to the program in many other ways.

Throughout this school year, tutors from last summer worked closely to mentor and guide the new incoming tutors in creating lesson plans, planning for travel, and anticipating resolution conflict. Kathleen Ortiz, Finance co-director and former student in the School of Education, came in to workshop the tutors' lessons and give them feedback on how to structure them for their appropriate age group. As a previous tutor herself, this proved especially effective in crafting lesson ideas that won't just go to waste or prove unsuccessful.

In Ecuador, tutors from La Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ) prepare for the 2019 summer program in a similar manner. Mae Caicedo and Camila Carpiof are both seasoned members of The Quito Project from Ecuador, and are newly appointed Project leaders for TQP 2019. With both pursuing degrees in education, they are able to incorporate and apply techniques from their class curriculum to the program and in the classroom.

Mae explains, "Being able to put into practice everything I learn in my education classes has been an immensely rewarding opportunity that has formed a large part of what I know now about teaching, learning and the reality of my country. There is nothing more satisfying than opening a door for boys and girls

USFQ Student and TQP Project Leaders, Camila Carpiof (top) and Mae Caicedo (below)



who have not had the opportunity to be in a fun and educational environment at the same time."

Much of their preparation involves working to organize transportation for both the camp kids and the tutors to the campsite, coordination of the arrival of the U-M tutors and pre-program orientation, and solidifying classroom plans. Mae continues, "as we look forward to this summer's camp, we find ourselves fundraising, organizing and planning activities with the Quito and Michigan tutors, organizing materials and contacting people who can collaborate with Food and extra activities."

This preparation is done by university students simply out of their own mission to provide opportunities for those less fortunate. To them, the program is more than just an experience or opportunity to apply their school studies or go abroad, it's to make a legitimate difference in the lives of others—as Camila divulges, "The TQP is a great project that allows me to deliver my time and invest it in the best possible way looking for smiles and great memories in children of scarce resources." For the tutors, it seems clear that their primary goal is the success of the students at the camp, and hopefully an impact that goes beyond the immediate scope, something that inspires greater access and more opportunities for quality education for all.

I'm really looking forward to learning from the local community and experiencing Ecuadorian culture. An experience of this nature is always a great opportunity to share culture and tradition between groups of people and I genuinely want to learn what daily life is like for the students and the community in which we are working.

— Darius Moore (Class of 2021). *Biology Health and Society, Spanish*

parting words

FROM THE OUTGOING PRESIDENT

“The presence and impact of The Quito Project (TQP) has grown tremendously over the last three years. We have especially grown this past year with the strengthening of our workshop’s curriculums of tackling the pitfalls of voluntourist behaviors and how to teach ESL abroad effectively. Seeing the positive impact our workshops have had along with realizing that many VSO’s and SSO’s that travel abroad do not have the same training as our organization let us to found the Council of Global Student Organizations (CGSO).

CGSO serves as an umbrella organization for all student orgs that travel abroad to gain cultural humility training, network with other orgs and professionals in the field, and share best practices to ensure that their initiatives are as impactful as possible. We hope that through this growth of TQP, we can positively impact more student orgs to ensure that their international initiatives are centered around creating mutually-equitable partnerships that value community input and learning for many more years to come.

- Marina Ross (BA '19) Economics; Business Administration; Spanish Language, Literature, & Culture. President, The Quito Project 2016-2019; Co-Founder, Council of Global Student Organizations

2018 TQP tutors (from left to right): Francesca Romano, Katie Ortiz, Nick Farrugia, Amy Muñoz, Zack Safadi and Megan Zabik





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The Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (LACS) at the University of Michigan is committed to promoting a broader and deeper understanding of the region--its histories, cultures, and peoples. The center provides a venue for faculty, students, and the community to learn and share knowledge and partners with a host of units across campus on projects of mutual interest.

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