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Cover photo of Ecuador by Darren Camilleri K'14
INTRODUCTION TO THE ECUADOR PROGRAM GUIDEBOOK

With your departure for Ecuador fast approaching, many of you have begun to wonder what it's going to be like spending two or three quarters in Quito. What will you experience living and studying in Quito, and in traveling to other parts of the country? Will the family you'll be living with accept you just as you are now, or will you need to make some adjustments in order to fit into your new household? Have you forgotten to do anything before your departure? Will your Spanish be good enough to allow you to do well in your classes, and to meet people outside of class? And just how much should you plan to pack in your suitcases? Hopefully, this guidebook can begin to answer these and other questions.

This guidebook is a collection of suggestions and comments from students who have been to Ecuador in the past through Kalamazoo College’s study abroad program. The staff of the Center for International Programs has also provided additional program information, as has the staff from our university partner, Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ). The guidebook is intended to answer many practical questions as well as provide an introduction to Quito and USFQ.

All information in the guidebook was accurate to the best of our knowledge at the time of printing. We recognize that there might be some changes in the program made on site and encourage you to use this guidebook accordingly. When you return from your study abroad experience in Ecuador, we hope you will share your experiences to help us in the CIP revise and update this guide for the following year’s participants.

Ultimately, no written materials or any other resource can fully prepare you for what lies ahead of you during your study abroad in Ecuador. The best preparation is to commit yourself to keeping an open mind, remaining flexible, and being patient with yourself and others as you undertake your experience and adjust to your new environment.

The staff of the Center for International Programs appreciates the assistance of former participants and the staff of the Office of International Programs at Universidad San Francisco de Quito for their assistance with this guide.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION TO THE ECUADOR PROGRAM GUIDEBOOK ................................ 2  
INTRODUCTION TO ECUADOR AND QUITO ......................................................... 6  
PROGRAM CALENDAR 2015-2016 .................................................................... 7  

PRE-DEPARTURE PREPARATION ....................................................................... 8  
PASSPORTS AND VISAS ................................................................................... 8  
SECURITY MEASURES ..................................................................................... 8  
FLIGHT CONNECTIONS .................................................................................... 9  
MONEY ............................................................................................................. 9  
CLIMATE ......................................................................................................... 11  
PACKING AND LUGGAGE RESTRICTIONS .................................................... 11  
BILLING .......................................................................................................... 13  
HEALTH AND MEDICAL ISSUES ................................................................ 13  
VEGETARIANISM ............................................................................................ 14  

ARRIVAL IN QUITO .......................................................................................... 14  
HEALTH PRECAUTIONS ................................................................................ 15  
DIARRHEA ........................................................................................................ 15  
MALARIA, ZIKA, AND CHIKUNGUNYA ............................................................ 16  
PREVENTING MOSQUITO-BORNE ILLNESSES ............................................ 17  
FOOD AND WATER ....................................................................................... 17  
LOCAL TRANSPORTATION ............................................................................ 18  
TRAVEL AND VACATIONS ............................................................................ 18  
TRAVELING IN POLITICALLY-TURBULENT AREAS ........................................ 19  
TIPS ON INDEPENDENT TRAVEL IN ECUADOR AND ELSEWHERE IN LATIN AMERICA ............................................................... 19  
DRUG ADVISORY ............................................................................................ 20  
SAFETY ........................................................................................................... 20  
MAIL ............................................................................................................... 21  
EMERGENCIES ............................................................................................... 22  

THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM .......................................................................... 23  
PROGRAM STAFF ............................................................................................ 23  
ON-SITE ORIENTATION ................................................................................ 23  
UNIVERSITY SETTING .................................................................................... 23
GENERAL ACADEMIC INFORMATION ................................................................. 24
COURSES AND CREDITS .................................................................................. 24
EMAIL .................................................................................................................. 26
INTEGRATIVE CULTURAL PROJECT ............................................................... 26
GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR ICRPS ................................................................. 28

ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY FIELD STUDY PROJECT ......................... 32

LIVING IN QUITO AND CUMBAYA ................................................................. 32
THE HOMESTAY EXPERIENCE ....................................................................... 32
ADJUSTING TO YOUR FAMILY ........................................................................ 32
HELPFUL HINTS FOR A POSITIVE FAMILY EXPERIENCE ......................... 33
USFQ EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS LIVING IN HOMESTAYS .................. 34
MEALS ............................................................................................................... 35
DOMESTIC HELP .............................................................................................. 35
GIFTS .................................................................................................................. 36
LAUNDRY ............................................................................................................ 36
TELEPHONE USE ............................................................................................. 36
LEAVING YOUR HOMESTAY AND DESIGNATED VACATION PERIODS .......... 37
ADAPTING TO ECUADORIAN CULTURE ......................................................... 37
DOING WITHOUT .............................................................................................. 37
ECUADOR: THE SECOND CULTURE ................................................................ 38
GETTING TO KNOW ECUADOR ...................................................................... 39
KNOW WHAT’S GOING ON IN THE US .......................................................... 39
SPEAKING SPANISH ......................................................................................... 40
ECUADORIAN SPANISH ................................................................................... 40
GENDER RELATIONS ....................................................................................... 40

YOUR RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES ..................................................... 41
YOUR RETURN FLIGHT ...................................................................................... 41
PREPARING FOR YOUR RETURN TO THE US ............................................. 41
RETURNING HOME ......................................................................................... 42
READJUSTMENT ............................................................................................... 42
WHEN YOU’RE HOME . . . YOUR HEALTH ................................................... 43

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS AND ADDRESSES ................................... 44

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR THE ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY PROGRAM 44
ABSOLUTE — MUST BRING ITEMS FROM THE UNITED STATES ................... 45
GENERAL ACADEMIC INFORMATION .......................................................... 46
ADVICE FROM PAST-PARTICIPANTS ................................................................. 47
RECOMMENDED THINGS TO DO ................................................................. 47
LIVING IN QUITO: CULTURE AND CITY LIFE ............................................ 48
THOUGHTFUL RESPONSES ........................................................................... 50
RECOMMENDED PLACES TO VISIT ............................................................ 50
TRAVEL ADVICE ......................................................................................... 51
COURSES AND ICRP ..................................................................................... 51
FOOD ............................................................................................................. 52
GENERAL ADVICE FOR STUDY ABROAD ..................................................... 52

PAST PARTICIPANT INFORMATION ............................................................... 53
OTHER TIPS .................................................................................................. 53
INTRODUCTION TO ECUADOR AND QUITO

You will soon travel to one of the most diverse areas in the world. About 70% of the national population refers to itself as mestizo, or people of racially mixed heritage, and about 10% of the population is made up of people of primarily Spanish descent. Ecuador’s ethnic composition is a rich mixture of indigenous peoples, mestizos, whites, blacks, and immigrants from all over the world. The variety of climates, natural resources, and cultures that will surround you during your study abroad experience in Ecuador is breathtaking.

Ecuador can be divided into four distinct regions, three of which run north to south: the coastal zone in western Ecuador; the Sierra, the habitable valleys that lie between the twin cordilleras of the Andes Mountains; and the Oriente or rain forest zone in eastern Ecuador. The fourth and perhaps most famous region is the Galápagos Islands, located some 600 miles from the coast. A number of Afro-Ecuadorians live in the coastal region, some of whom are descendants of African slaves who were brought to Ecuador in the 18th century to work on the sugar plantations. In the Oriente, the culture of the indigenous peoples shows less Spanish influence. They speak a variety of dialects and also exhibit very different patterns of community formation from people living outside of the rain forest.

Your home will be in Quito, the cosmopolitan capital and second largest city in Ecuador (the first being Guayaquil, located on the coast). Located in the Sierra, surrounded by mountains and volcanoes, Quito is a beautiful city of approximately two million inhabitants. The colonial centro of the city is surrounded by different barrios comprised of people from various socioeconomic classes and ethnic groups. In that sense, the city is a microcosm of the larger Ecuadorian society. Quito is a very large city with the population, traffic, activity, and noise you’d expect from a metropolitan area in the United States. Buses, taxis, small trucks, and cars abound in this bustling, dynamic capital.

In Quito you’ll find a myriad of educational, cultural and social activities—theatres, films, art galleries, bars, discos, museums, shops and cafes. Many students and other young people commonly meet on Avenida Amazonas, the main commercial street in Quito, and on Avenida González Suárez. Nightclubs are located all over the city but are concentrated in the Mariscal area,
which also has an abundance of Internet cafés. You’ll also want to visit *pueblos* outside of the city where you’ll find the largest concentration of *Quichua* speakers. One such village, *Otavalo*, is the home of Ecuador’s most famous market place, a favorite among Ecuadorians and international visitors alike.

Kalamazoo’s study abroad university partner in Quito is the Universidad San Francisco de Quito, a private liberal arts university located in Cumbayá, a community in the valley east of Quito. USFQ was founded in 1988 and was the first liberal arts university in the country of Ecuador. Cumbayá is about forty-five minutes to an hour away from Quito.

**PROGRAM CALENDAR 2015-2016**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrival in Quito</td>
<td>Thursday, August 10, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation for Kalamazoo students</td>
<td>August 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensive Spanish Classes &amp; Orientation</td>
<td>August 12, and August 14-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation at USFQ</td>
<td>August 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Tour</td>
<td>August 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome Lunch</td>
<td>August 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USFQ classes begin</td>
<td>Monday, August 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last day to add/drop USFQ classes</td>
<td>Tuesday, August 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excursion to Mindo (1 night)</td>
<td>September 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last day to withdraw USFQ classes with “W”</td>
<td>Tuesday, September 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excursion to Costa (4 nights)</td>
<td>October 5-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excursion to Sierra/Paramo (2 nights)</td>
<td>November 10-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USFQ classes end</td>
<td>Thursday, December 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last day of homestays for holiday</td>
<td>December 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First day available to return to homestay</td>
<td>Tuesday, January 2, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galápagos Orientation</td>
<td>January 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galápagos Excursion &amp; Project</td>
<td>January 4-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminar and work on Projects</td>
<td>January 14-17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Orientation TBS/Amazonia & Trips  January 18
Excursion to Tiputini & Upper Amazonia  January 19-26
Seminar Trips Reflections and De-briefing/
Work on Projects in Quito  January 27-31
Farewell Dinner  Friday, February 2
End of Program, Last day with Host Families  Saturday, February 3, 2018
VISA EXTENSION EXPIRES: Last Day to Leave  Sunday, February 5, 2018

All program dates depend entirely upon the program and academic schedule of Universidad San Francisco de Quito and may change on site. Please consult the Resident Director once you are on site before making any travel or guest arrangements according to these calendars.

PRE-DEPARTURE PREPARATION

PASSPORTS AND VISAS

It is necessary to have a valid passport and visa for your entire stay in Ecuador. You must have your passport to board your international flight. You will receive a 90-day tourist visa upon arrival, when you go through Ecuadorian customs. Tania Ledergerber, the Resident Director, will inform you about the process for renewing your tourist visa after you have arrived in Quito.

Be sure to take a couple of copies of your passport with you. It’s a good idea to leave a copy of it with your family in the United States, too. You should carry a copy of your passport with you at all times. Carry your actual passport with you only when you need to change money or are traveling outside of the city/country. The same advice applies for carrying your credit card and/or ATM debit card: carry these only when you need to use them.

SECURITY MEASURES

The CIP recommends that you arrive at least 2 hours ahead of time for domestic flights and 3-4 hours early for international flights. You should also double check luggage and carry-on restrictions when you re-confirm your flight. Make sure you do not accept any packages or items from anyone at the airport. All electronic items, such as laptops and cell phones, may be subjected to additional screening. If you bring a laptop, be prepared to remove it from its travel case so that
both can be X-rayed separately. For further information on security measures, see the Federal Aviation Administration website at www.faa.gov

**FLIGHT CONNECTIONS**

Security procedures for international flights have increased significantly in recent years and you must present yourself at the gate a minimum of two hours before departure or you risk not being permitted to board. Please remember that you must go through security before arriving at your gate – you should be prepared for security to take an hour or so (to wait in line and be searched). Should you miss a connection, please note that an airline representative at the airport must reroute you—the travel agent that works with the CIP, Travel Leaders, cannot assist you, nor can the CIP. If your arrival in Quito is altered, you must contact Tania Ledergerber, Resident Director, to indicate the change in your arrival and to receive arrival instructions. You may reach Tania by calling 011.593.9.9803.1408 (cell) from outside of Ecuador.

**MONEY**

In 2000, Ecuador adopted the US dollar as its currency in an effort to curb rampant inflation and stabilize its economy. In general, prices in Ecuador are a bit lower than in the United States, though they vary widely and can be greater for imported goods and items purchased in the city. Recent economic conditions have resulted in increased prices generally but many personal items are less expensive than in the US.

You will want to take some personal spending money with you to Quito for personal items, materials required for the program, transportation in the city, the occasional meal out, nightlife, personal travel, and gifts. Former participants recommend taking between $1500 and $4000 for the long-term program or about $500 per month. The amount of money you should bring will depend upon how you intend to live. Past participants from recent programs stated that $1500-3000 was about the average amount needed, and they also pointed out that it would be possible to spend less than $1500 and over $2000, depending on lifestyle choices. Past participants recommend that you keep track of where you spend your money—little things add up quickly. Keep in mind that you may need to purchase books, too. Past participants have also recommended bringing a lot of $10, $5 and $1 bills and rolls of quarters. It can be difficult to make change in Ecuador, and small bills and coins will be helpful for many things, including riding the bus.
Students suggest using ATMs for managing money. Credit cards, particularly Visa and MasterCard, are also widely used throughout Quito. It is a good idea to have photocopies of your credit cards in case they’re lost or stolen. Quito is a banking center for the country so you’ll find banks most everywhere in the city with a wide variety of services. You will want to contact your bank and credit card companies BEFORE leaving for Ecuador to inform them that you’ll be living in Ecuador for several months, and also to find out about any transaction fees you can expect to pay. If one of your credit cards gets lost, have it send via private courier like FedEx or DHL, it’s safer than the regular mail.

Traveler’s checks are not recommended for travel to Ecuador since they are difficult to cash. If you do choose to use traveler’s checks, experience recommends that you purchase them in small denominations such as $20 and $50, rather than large, so you can change smaller amounts of money as needed. Larger bills can be hard to break in Ecuador, but the big supermarket chain in Quito, Supermaxi or Megamaxi, can usually break large bills, although you will be expected to purchase something. For bus fare, former participants advise budgeting $1-3 a day for local transportation and some suggest bringing a couple rolls of quarters to Ecuador.

Be very careful not to accept any damaged or torn dollar bills as these will not be accepted by other banks or businesses, although you could get new ones in exchange at the Banco Central del Ecuador. Beware of counterfeit dollar bills and dollar coins. Do not accept $100 bills of the “CB” series, especially “CB-B2”. There have been enough problems with counterfeit bills of this series that they are rejected by most establishments and even banks.

Local banks or Casas de Cambio do not change personal checks from foreign banks unless you have a personal account at any local bank; in this case, you have to deposit your foreign check in your local bank account and wait for one month until the money is credited. A number of banks have ATM machines which can only be used with certain bank networks, most commonly Cirrus. If your bank card is something other than Cirrus, you can go to the Banco de Guayaquil (Colón y Reina Victoria). Bank machines are sometimes out of order in Ecuador, so be prepared to spend more time banking while in Ecuador. BE PATIENT! Be aware of who is around you at ATM machines because thefts at ATMs are becoming more common in Quito.

Some international students have recently had a good experience having money sent to them through Western Union. This is relatively inexpensive from the U.S. and is a way around using ATM machines.

There are many ATMs in Quito but service and reliability vary. Regardless of how much money you take or in what form, budget carefully and keep your money in a safe, locked place.
CLIMATE
You will most likely enjoy an eternal spring in Quito. Because of the altitude of close to 10,000 feet, mornings and evenings will be quite cool, so be sure to bring sweaters and a fleece jacket. Students are often surprised by the low temperatures in Quito, and many past participants have pointed out the importance of bringing a sweater or two, as well as the importance of dressing in layers. You can expect temperatures to rise considerably during the day. Given the altitude, Quito can be cooler than the USFQ campus in Cumbayá, which is almost 1000 ft. lower than the city. Typically, the temperature may be 45º F in the mornings and evenings and 63-67º F during the height of the day, if not warmer. While Ecuador experiences much less dramatic seasonal changes than Kalamazoo, there are definite periods of rainfall and brilliant sun. The rainy season in Quito typically lasts from the end of October through February, with a short break during December and January. It may rain a bit every day, with the heaviest rainfall in the afternoon, so bring the appropriate gear and a strong umbrella. Field conditions vary widely.

PACKING AND LUGGAGE RESTRICTIONS
With the significant increase in air travelers, domestic and international air carriers are becoming more and more restrictive in the number, type, and weight of luggage permitted. Though some have not yet enforced new government guidelines, you might be limited to one carry-on and one piece of checked luggage. Many airlines charge extra for more than one piece of checked luggage, and some will charge a fee for one piece of checked luggage. You will want to check directly with your airline or with Travel Leaders to determine the restrictions for your destination. Generally, each piece of checked luggage on international flights cannot weigh more than 50 pounds. The carry-on must fit under the seat in front of you or in the overhead bin. If your luggage does not meet airline requirements, you will be required to pay for excess weight. The program does not cover this expense.

Experienced international travelers pack their luggage and then remove half of the contents, reevaluate, and remove half again—do not take more than you can move or are willing to carry. You’ll also want to allow some room for the personal and gift purchases you make during your program. We also recommend that you pack one change of clothes and essential items in your carry-on. Do not pack your passport, money, prescription medication or valuables in your
checked luggage—keep these with you at all times. Leave valuable or sentimental items such as jewelry at home.

You may be surprised by how students at USFQ dress compared to students in the US. Jeans, sweaters, and nice t-shirts are common, but usually a bit neater in appearance than you might be accustomed to in some cases. Shorts and sandals are rarely worn in Quito or at USFQ and are used primarily at the beach or during sport activities. First impressions are important in Ecuadorian society, so be comfortable but avoid appearing sloppy or unkempt. Remember that the temperature is likely to change throughout the day and that you won’t have a residence hall room nearby for additions or substitutions—layering is a good bet. Here’s a sample packing list suggested by former participants:

- Jeans, light-weight pants, long shorts, black pants
- Sweaters (but NOT bulky/heavy ones; buy them there instead) and a sweatshirt or two
- Hat (really important in the Galápagos and useful most other places, too)
- A warmer jacket, something that you would normally wear during the fall or spring in Kalamazoo—it can get quite cold at night
- Windbreaker jacket, t-shirts, pullovers
- If you have big feet, tall rubber boots and other shoes you may need (large sizes are not available in Ecuador)
- Skirts—slightly above the knee is generally acceptable
- One or two nice outfits for dinner out—skirt/dress or jacket/shirt/tie
- Dressy shoes for going out, comfortable yet nice shoes for walking—you’ll walk a lot in Quito. Flats and closed-toe shoes for women best options! Flip-flops not popular in Ecuador like they are in the U.S! Cute shoes that you like and are durable!!! USFQ kids dress really well!
- Umbrella, rain gear, definitely a rain coat
- Bathing suit
- Water shoes (Tevas or Keenes)
- Pajamas, house shoes
- Toiletries, tampons, condoms, first aid kit, sunscreen—SPF 15 minimum recommended—students have mentioned that most toiletries are available in Ecuador but that it’s still highly recommended that you bring sunscreen from the US
- Over-the-counter medicines that you prefer, as well as Pepto Bismol or equivalent
- Contact solutions, glasses—with a copy of the prescription
- Sunglasses—necessary for the sun, can be bought quite cheaply in Ecuador
▪ Refillable water bottle
▪ Prescriptions in original containers—with a copy of the prescription. If possible, bring all the medicine you need for the entire program, customs in Ecuador will not allow you to mail any from the US.
▪ Battery powered alarm clock, flashlight, hairdryer—Ecuador uses the same electrical system as the U.S.
▪ ATM/credit cards, copies of your passport front and back of credit/debit cards, 4-5 passport photos
▪ Money belt, luggage locks, batteries, Ziploc bags, bags with zippers and zippered pockets inside
▪ Country guide to Ecuador such as The Lonely Planet Guide to Ecuador, however you should also heed the advice given to you by locals such as your host family, classmates, professors, USFQ staff, etc.
▪ Spanish/English dictionary, personal journal, photos of family/friends
▪ Students have recommended creating an account on a cloud network
▪ **NOTE:** ALL students travel to Tiputini and to the Galapagos. Liberal Arts students please consider bringing the items suggested in the EE Packing List found on page 44.

**BILLING**

The Center for International Programs does not handle the billing for the program. As on campus, the Business Office issues your bill for study abroad. You will receive your bills for the program costs at your home address just prior to the beginning of each quarter that you are abroad just as when you are on Kalamazoo’s campus. For specific questions regarding your account, please direct these to Patrick Farmer in the Business Office, 269.337.7226 or pfarmer@kzoo.edu

**HEALTH AND MEDICAL ISSUES**

You need to be up-to-date with your standard immunizations, as well as any specific requirements for Ecuador, in order to be permitted to enter the country. Please refer to the Study Abroad Handbook for specific information or consult the Kalamazoo College Health Center or your primary care physician. It’s a good idea to take care of other personal health matters prior to departure, too, such as dental appointments. Be sure to take prescription medications in the original, labeled containers and to take a quantity sufficient for your stay. Some prescription medications are available in Ecuador but often under different names and dosages. A clear copy of any prescription (generic/scientific name, brand name, and dosage) is a must for any refills. If possible, bring all the medicine you need for the entire program, customs in Ecuador will not allow you to mail any from the US.
VEGETARIANISM

Our university colleagues at USFQ have requested that all students preparing to study in Ecuador be informed that they may find themselves in situations where they will be expected to eat meat during their stay. Vegetarianism is not common in Ecuador, although former participants report that more and more vegetarian restaurants are appearing in Quito and USFQ's cafeteria offers vegetarian food daily. By refusing to eat meat when it is served to you, however, you risk offending the people with whom you are eating. You cannot expect much support from the program administrators there if you plan to continue your vegetarianism in Ecuador, simply because it is not as commonly practiced in Ecuadorian culture. In fact, it can be considered culturally insensitive to refuse food that has been offered you.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The program administrators have notified us that no special accommodations will be made for vegetarians during excursions. If you require a vegetarian diet that cannot be provided by USFQ on such occasions, you will be responsible for paying for and providing your own meals at those times. Be very specific about what you will and will not eat. It is essential for your welfare that no family discovers this after arrival. Any extra expenses incurred because of special dietary needs will be borne by the student.

ARRIVAL IN QUITO

When you arrive in Quito, you will exit the plane and go through immigration before claiming your luggage. Have your passport, disembarkation card (you’ll receive this on the plane) and visa papers handy for the immigration official. You may be asked a few questions—you should expect to speak Spanish. Once you’ve been permitted to enter the country, you will gather your luggage.
You will also need to have your luggage claim ticket (usually stapled inside your airline ticket envelope) available because you will be asked for it before you leave with your luggage. The Resident Director and possibly other staff from program or USFQ will meet you outside the airport. Look for a Kalamazoo sign. You will move into your homestay immediately thereafter. Arrival in Quito is often quite festive, with lots of people waiting for family and friends to return to the city. It may be a bit overwhelming, especially in Spanish, but you’ll certainly be welcomed. Don’t be surprised if you are embraced or even kissed on the cheek by the staff, a quick kiss on the cheek is a customary form of greeting in Ecuador.

HEALTH PRECAUTIONS

It is not uncommon to experience a period of adjustment to the altitude in Quito for several days after your arrival. At over 9000 feet above sea level, you may experience symptoms of altitude sickness—dizziness, nausea, shortness of breath, difficulty sleeping and decreased appetite are common. It may be a few weeks before you are accustomed to the altitude. Take it easy the first week or so and if symptoms persist, see the program staff. Take care not to become dehydrated—drink plenty of safe water. Both caffeine and alcohol exacerbate the symptoms of altitude sickness.

If at any time during your program in Ecuador you are bitten by a dog, inform the resident director immediately. There are many dogs on the streets in Quito and elsewhere and rabies is more common than in other countries. A rabies vaccination must be administered soon after the bite, so it is imperative that you contact the program staff right away. If you are bitten by any animal, please seek medical attention immediately.

If you are considering being sexually active while in Ecuador, take the proper precautions against pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and HIV/AIDS. Take a supply of condoms and/or dental dams with you and make sure you know how to use them properly.

The following information on diarrhea and malaria has been provided by the Kalamazoo College Health Center. For additional information, contact Lisa Ailstock, director, your primary care physician or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention http://www.cdc.gov/

DIARRHEA

It is not uncommon for students to experience diarrhea and related symptoms while living in Ecuador. In the past, some students have gotten quite ill and been hospitalized for intestinal infections and other ailments. In some cases, students have returned to the U.S. with continuing stomach and intestinal problems. You will need to be vigilant and take care with what you eat and drink although you will observe Ecuadorians eating many things and not becoming sick. This is normal for Ecuadorians because their systems have adapted to certain bacteria that will be unfamiliar to you. A certain amount of stomach discomfort and diarrhea is to be expected—turista
is a common complaint from international sojourners throughout the world. Do not be alarmed by this inconvenience as your system adjusts. Common symptoms of *turista* are abdominal cramps, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.

If diarrhea becomes severe and prolonged, you risk becoming dehydrated. It is imperative that you maintain proper hydration, especially at such altitudes. For periodic diarrhea, drink at least three liters of clear liquid a day—water with a bit of sugar and salt added is good. Avoid drinks containing caffeine, milk and alcohol. Take anti-diarrheal medications with care—they can sometimes prolong or worsen your symptoms. Before you leave for Ecuador, discuss possible treatments with your primary care physician.

The “BRAT” diet is often recommended by seasoned travelers for helping your system recover from diarrhea—the first day or so, consume only clear liquids (water, soup) and avoid acidic juices. Gradually add bananas, plain rice, apple sauce, and toast. Some infections do not respond well to bananas, so keep in mind that these are suggestions only. Your physician or a local physician may make other recommendations according to your particular case.

If diarrhea persists more than 72 hours or if you have bloody diarrhea, severe abdominal pain, and/or a high fever, contact the resident director immediately for medical assistance. You will receive information about recommended local physicians during orientation at USFQ.

**MALARIA, ZIKA, AND CHIKUNGUNYA**

Malaria is found in Ecuador at altitudes below 1,500 meters and Zika and Chikungunya below 2200 meters. While it is not a problem in Quito you should take precautions if you plan on traveling outside of Quito to areas below this altitude, especially to the coast or rain forest.

It is essential that you follow your anti-malarial medication and take it as scheduled. Some anti-malarial medications must be taken several weeks prior to exposure to prevent malaria, so you cannot expect to be protected if you start and stop the medication depending upon your excursions or travels. Malaria is potentially fatal and a very serious health problem in many parts of the world.

Doxycycline is the anti-malarial drug recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Committee on Immunization Practices, and the American College Health Association. The health organizations mentioned above recommend that you take the Doxycycline consistent with the instructions provided by the Health Center or your primary care physician.

Malaria, Zika and Chikungunya are rarely acquired if you’ve taken proper precautions but if you become ill and suspect it may be one of these illnesses, early treatment is essential. Consider any flu-like illness with fever in a lower altitude area to be suspect until proven otherwise. See the
program staff or recommended local physician immediately. Delay in seeking medical care and delay in diagnosis increases the chances of complications and fatality. Mosquito-borne illnesses can occur as early as six days after being bitten by an infected mosquito and as late as several months after exposure. Be sure to inform your physician of your recent travel history should you experience symptoms after you return to the US.

Please see detailed Health Center here: https://reason.kzoo.edu/healthcenter/travelclinic/ and by following the link at the bottom of the page.

**PREVENTING MOSQUITO-BORNE ILLNESSES**

You will be more susceptible to mosquito-borne illnesses if and when you travel outside of Quito to a region where mosquitoes are plentiful, such as the coast and the rain forest. In addition to taking the recommended medication, you should consider taking some simple precautions.

- Minimize mosquito bites by wearing long sleeves and long pants
- Avoid sheer fabrics, sandals, open shoes, shiny jewelry, and perfumed toiletries
- Use an insect repellent that contains DEET (30%) on your skin and permethrin on clothing
- Remain indoors at dusk and after dark
- Choose accommodations with tidy grounds, air conditioning, mosquito netting, or screened windows
- Visit rural and low-lying areas only during the day

**FOOD AND WATER**

Tap water in Ecuador is not drinkable. Most likely your family will purify their drinking water by boiling or filtering it or they will buy bottled water. To purify tap water, boil it for at least 20 minutes at a high rolling boil. You may want to boil water that has been filtered if you find that you are having diarrhea or other stomach problems with some frequency. Drink other bottled beverages and avoid ice. As some stomachs are more sensitive and susceptible than others, be sure to use safe water when brushing your teeth and taking medications.

Though everyone’s digestive system differs, you are advised to avoid most street food such as any peeled fruits, vegetables, meats, and fruit juices. Even if you see the food being prepared before your eyes, you won’t know how it got there nor will you know if fresh fruits or vegetables were washed with safe water. Avoid all raw or undercooked fish, shellfish, and meat. You should be wary of dairy products (milk, ice cream, cheese, yogurt), which may be unpasteurized or improperly stored.

The best advice is to avoid taking unnecessary risks with your health. You may find yourself in a situation where it would be culturally offensive not to eat something that is offered you. You will
have to decide what to do in those situations on an individual basis. There is no one right answer. Remember this credo: cook it, boil it, peel it, or forget it.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

In Quito you’ll find that buses are probably the cheapest and most common form of local transport. In recent years, however, bus fare has increased and former participants advise you to count on spending at least $1-3 a day and very likely more on local buses. Taxis will cost more, but are still much cheaper than in the US. Several students have also advised bringing a couple rolls of quarters to Ecuador as change is sometimes hard to come by. Bus schedules vary considerably and take some experience to use effectively. Ask your host family for recommendations regarding appropriate transportation. If you’re out at night, always take a taxi, know where you are going, and how to get there. Be sure to CALL the taxi to pick you up instead of finding one on the street. Make sure to find out the cost of the ride before you get in if there isn’t a meter, although most taxis do have meters. It’s likely that you will take a bus to and from USFQ so learn how to navigate the city by bus early in your stay. Look into the Trole and Ecovia when you are there, two of the many forms of public transportation, but as always in any form of public transportation, be wary of pickpockets.

Bus service outside of Quito will include different types of service—first class, second class, and third class. On a first class bus, you’ll be able to travel non-stop to your destination. On other buses, there will be frequent stops along the way, more crowded conditions, and the journey will thus be quite a bit longer. If you plan to travel significantly within Ecuador, you might consider domestic airfares, which are often reasonably priced.

TRAVEL AND VACATIONS

When you travel in or out of the country, please inform Tania Ledergerber, and your host family, indicating where you are going and approximately when you will return. You must also leave addresses where you can be contacted at approximately 48-hour intervals so that you may be reached in the event of an emergency. This is a policy for all students on study abroad. Please remember that you will cause great distress to your family in the US if they do not know your whereabouts, and that we cannot assist them or you if we don’t know where you are.

When traveling, we strongly discourage you from traveling alone. You must also inform the resident staff (Tania and Hugo). Travel to Colombia is strongly discouraged. Please also note that you must pay an airport tax of US $41 cash (at the time of printing) each time you leave the country by plane. You will also have to pay a departure tax if you depart the country by bus,
though this tax varies. You will pay in US dollars. This cost is not covered by the program fees. Sometimes this airport tax is included in the airfare, other times the passenger has to pay in cash at the airport before departing.

Quito has a new airport that is located outside of the city. If you travel to the airport from Quito between 11pm and 5am, there is typically not much traffic, and the trip takes about an hour. If you go to the airport from Quito at other times of day when traffic is heavy, it can take from 2-4 hours.

Please keep that in mind as you make plans to leave Quito by plane. You should also reconfirm your flight at least 48 hours in advance and be at the airport 3 hours before the scheduled departure time as lines can get very long. The cost of a taxi from Quito to the airport is about $25-$30. The airport bus charges around $8.

TRAVELING IN POLITICALLY-TURBULENT AREAS

Choose with care the routes on which you travel, especially outside of Ecuador. The US Embassy communicates regularly with the international programs staff at USFQ. Avoid any area that the US Embassy, USFQ or the program staff indicate you should not visit: any guerrilla strongholds, and volatile zones, including the frontera between Perú and Ecuador and parts of Colombia. If you find yourself in a situation where there is political trouble and/or violence, please do the following:

- Remember that as an international visitor, the situation does not welcome your participation
- Lay low and stay inside
- Contact the nearest US Embassy or other international representative and follow instructions
- Contact your family and/or the Center for International Programs as soon as possible.
- Keep these numbers handy—CIP 1.269.337.7133 or Campus Security 1.269.337.7321—Security will attempt to contact us if it is after normal business hours.

TIPS ON INDEPENDENT TRAVEL IN ECUADOR AND ELSEWHERE IN LATIN AMERICA

- Avoid traveling alone and whenever possible, travel to a place where you know someone.
- Make sure you really know how to get there—false or vague directions are common.
- Take some type of pouch for documents, tickets, and money—never remove it.
- Keep your documents with you at all times—don’t pack them in luggage or a carry-on
- On buses, try to get a seat where you can watch what happens to your luggage and preferably on the aisle near the front of the bus
- Plan an itinerary and leave it with the Resident Director and/or send it home
- Call home and/or your homestay frequently and regularly, especially if your itinerary changes
If you are a US passport holder, register your travel with the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at the US Department of State. You will receive notifications sent to US citizens in the area.

- Allow plenty of time before scheduled departures—at least three-four hours minimum at the airport, buy tickets early, and arrive at the departure area early to claim your seat
- Be sure you’re on the right flight/bus for your destination and that you know when to get off
- Reconfirm your flights in person at the airline office or by phone 48 hours before you are due to leave—this is critical unless you don’t mind being denied a seat—having a ticket is not enough—you MUST reconfirm your flights
- Be wary of complete strangers who approach you and offer you rides—never accept a ride from a stranger when you are alone and remember that hitchhiking is not only dangerous—it is grounds for dismissal from the study abroad program

**DRUG ADVISORY**
Possessing, selling, and using drugs is illegal in Ecuador and those found guilty face significant penalties, including mandatory prison terms. If you are arrested, detained, or incarcerated, laws of the Republic of Ecuador will be applied, and no one in the United States will be able to assist you, including the US government.

**SAFETY**
As a large, cosmopolitan city, Quito will require you to be cautious with regard to your personal safety, just as you would expect to be in Chicago, Detroit, or New York. You will need to be cautious and street-smart. Given the economic and political situation of the country, its capital city is often the lightning rod for discontent. Strikes and demonstrations, known as huelgas, paros and manifestaciones, are common and increasing, though rarely violent. Most strikes occur in the colonial center of the city and participants are strongly encouraged to avoid these and other areas where strikes are taking place, common, or anticipated. Your presence is not likely to help and may even cause you harm, unlikely though it may be. Stay away.

Former participants report an increase in pick-pocketing and petty robbery in recent years. Avoid unlit areas at night when you are walking around the city and do not walk or take buses alone at night—especially women. Even during the day, some areas should be avoided. Do not take any unnecessary risks. You’ll learn more about getting around the city, as well as areas to avoid, during orientation at USFQ. Local advice may seem especially cautious but it’s best to abide by it if you are unfamiliar with the city, the language, and the customs.

As with most large cities, there are known areas best avoided in Quito. Local wisdom indicates that Parque Carolina is always dangerous, especially after 4:00 p.m. and throughout the night. The neighborhood of La Mariscal is generally considered dangerous due to the large number of people
who frequent the restaurants and bars—crime has increased in this area in recent years. The bus station in Quito is also considered less than secure. Do NOT hike or walk on the mountain Pichincha, located on the western side of Quito, alone or in groups. The newly-constructed teleférico park on Pichincha, however, seems well-staffed and relatively safe. If you visit the teleférico, though, do NOT venture away from the park on any of the paths that lead out onto the surrounding mountain side. There have been reports of several assaults in these areas. Ask program staff and your host family before venturing onto Pichincha. The staff at USFQ recommends that students always move in groups around the city and avoid all parks at dusk and after dark. Keep in mind that because of its position on the equator, it is dark in Ecuador by 7pm.

If you do have to return home alone from an evening out for whatever reason, call ahead to take a taxi. While you may not want to rely on taxis as your primary source of transportation every day, they are your best option at night and are not especially expensive. Even while in a taxi, however, be alert at all times. We recommend that when you take a taxi, always call the taxi company as opposed to going out to hail a taxi in the street. If possible, have a friend see you to the door of the taxi and tell you that she or he is expecting a phone call when you arrive home. You should also know exactly where you are going and generally how to get there to be most secure. Do not sit in the front seat, and do not get into a taxi if there are any people other than the driver inside.

In general, avoid any behavior that will call attention to you—avoid flashing jewelry, cellphones, earphones, watches, or wallets. It’s always a good idea to wear your money on your person, especially when traveling. Take care with your camera, too—keeping it in a sturdy camera bag is preferable to wearing it around your neck though this does not guarantee it won’t be taken. Another precaution you can take to promote your safety and well-being while abroad is to avoid consuming alcoholic beverages in excess. If you are noticeably drunk you are much more vulnerable to potential safety hazards than when you’re sober. Enjoy yourself in moderation if you choose to drink.

Though women travelers often have additional concerns for safety, both men and women should be aware of their safety at all times. In the past, men have been just as susceptible to potential risks. Your presence will attract additional interest, whether positive or negative. Be aware of your surroundings at all times, listen to your instincts, and use common sense. If you are the victim of physical or sexual assault, contact the Resident Directors immediately for assistance. Please also review the “Responding to Physical or Sexual Assault While on Study Abroad” section in the Handbook to be better prepared in the event that you or a friend experience such a situation. You will also receive a business card from the CIP with emergency information.
Regular mail between the US and Ecuador can take anywhere from 10 to 20 days to arrive by airmail. For quicker service, mail your letters from the Central Post Office in downtown Quito. Avoid using certified mail as it takes longer than airmail. When you need to receive or send something in a hurry, you can use an express service such as DHL or Federal Express (FedEx) or a fax. These sources are more expensive but sometimes necessary depending upon the document. We recommend that you not have packages sent to you from home as customs officials often impose hefty fees on them. Do not send money. Also tell your family and friends to declare a relatively low value and maybe even insure the package, if it’s necessary to send one at all.

Your mailing address in Quito will be at the Universidad. Your mailing address is:

YOUR NAME / Kalamazoo Program
c/o Programas Internacionales
Universidad San Francisco de Quito
Diego de Robles S/N y Pampite-Cumbayá
P.O. Box 17-12-841
Quito-Ecuador
Teléfonos: PBX (593) 2 2971700

EMERGENCIES

► In case of an emergency, you should first contact Tania Ledergerber 011.593.9.9803.1408.

An Emergency card will be issued for you and provided by Tania upon arrival with additional local emergency contact phones. Additional contact information is in the Important Phone Numbers and Addresses section. She will notify the appropriate people on site. In case there is an emergency that requires you to contact us in the Center for International Programs, call one of the following:

Center for International Programs
voice: 269. 337. 7133
fax: 269. 337. 7400

Alayna Lewis, Program Manager (text or call) 269. 251. 8876 (cell)

Margaret Wiedenhoft, Executive Director (text or call) 269. 267-5800 (cell)
THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

PROGRAM STAFF

Tania Ledergerber is the Resident Director for the Kalamazoo College program at USFQ. Hugo Valdebenito is the academic coordinator of the Environment and Ecology program. Once you arrive in Quito, Tania and Hugo will be your primary resources and will oversee all other aspects of your study abroad program.

Alexandra Velasco is the director of the Oficina de Programas Internacionales (OPI) at USFQ. Her office staff will assist you with your course selection as well as your orientation program on campus. Ms. Velasco and the rest of the staff in the OPI will also be a resource for you and other international students at USFQ. You will meet these people soon after arriving in Quito. You will find that many of the professors and administrators at USFQ have extensive international experience and are very familiar with US culture. While many are bilingual and several trilingual or multilingual, you are expected to speak Spanish with them at all times. If a professor speaks to you in English, feel free to politely ask that s/he switch to Spanish to help you learn.

ON-SITE ORIENTATION

Soon after your arrival in Quito, you will complete a short Spanish review and attend a special orientation session for students who have just arrived at the Universidad San Francisco de Quito. Your participation in this program is required and will be valuable to you as you begin to learn about your new campus. You will receive a considerable amount of information about the Universidad, apply for your USFQ ID card, and learn more about navigating Ecuadorian culture during this program.

UNIVERSITY SETTING

You will be enrolled as a “visiting international student” at the Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ). USFQ is a private university of approximately 2500 students, founded in 1988 as the first liberal arts university in Ecuador. Since its founding, the Universidad has grown by leaps and bounds, outgrowing its original campus. The campus is located about 20 minutes or so outside of Quito in the valley of Cumbayá. Modeled after the US university system, USFQ offers a liberal arts and sciences curriculum, as well as a number of professional and postgraduate programs. The majority of students attending USFQ are from a middle-class to upper-middle socioeconomic background. Many have been to the US before and many can speak and understand some English. It is most
courteous, however, to speak Spanish, even among yourselves, while you are at the Universidad and in public places, and to expect to be spoken to in Spanish.

Past participants have said that it can be difficult to become involved in clubs or student organizations at USFQ, but there are many opportunities to volunteer in Quito. Students advise that you ask professors, family members or anyone else, and look at your guidebooks. Also, by taking the initiative at USFQ, you will be able to meet Ecuadorian students. Don’t wait for them to come to you.

GENERAL ACADEMIC INFORMATION

For the 17-18 program in Ecuador, program participants will take a Spanish placement exam and register for classes online. Please make sure you check your K email account for these notices.

The format of classes includes a mix of lecture and classroom discussion. Most classes meet three days a week for one hour at a time. As in Kalamazoo, you’ll buy books at the campus bookstore—USFQ suggests you budget a minimum of $300 for books for the long-term program. Many classes also have reserved readings, which you can copy at the copy center located in the university. Please note—you must purchase your books with cash or a Diner’s Card as the bookstore does not accept traveler’s checks or other credit cards. Used books may be available but are not guaranteed. Some professors might use digital readings and will let you know how and where to access them. Students are given syllabi and reading lists at the beginning of the semester and should expect homework right away. Most additional materials are available in the USFQ library or from professors. Be sure to keep your syllabi in the event there are questions about material you covered once you return to K.

Other than USFQ’s library, another library recommended by USFQ is at the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLASCO). You will find a substantial collection of readings addressing development and social science issues in Latin America. You may also be able to use other university libraries in Quito, including those at the Universidad Central and the Universidad Católica. There are also several public libraries and collections in the city, including Biblioteca Lincoln in the Fulbright Commission and Abya Yala Bookstore.

COURSES AND CREDITS

Credit earned on study abroad can be used to satisfy major, minor, or concentration requirements at the discretion of the academic department and other graduation requirements at the discretion of the Registrar. Students must earn the equivalent of a “C” in the local grading system to receive credit for coursework completed abroad. Grades from all study abroad courses will appear on the Kalamazoo transcript but are not included in the Kalamazoo grade point average. The transcript
will list the title of the course, the appropriate discipline, and a translation of the local grade into the Kalamazoo “A, B, C” grading system.

Students in the long-term program must enroll for the equivalent of 6 K units. Students may not overload or underload. To be counted as a K unit, a course must have a minimum of 40 contact hours of instruction. All course work, including the ICRP and Ecology field work, must be completed and turned in before the end of the academic program or no credit will be given.

**Liberal Arts:**

The University program begins with a one-week intensive Spanish review. During the fall semester, students enroll in the equivalent of five units of course work. Students must enroll in one Spanish Conversation and Composition course to be determined by a placement exam. Additionally, all students will take *Ecosistemas y Biodiversidad en Ecuador*. This course will provide the knowledge and background necessary for the excursions to Tiputini, the Galapagos and other regions of Ecuador. All students will take a Service Learning course as well. For Liberal Arts Students, this course will serve as the basis for your Intercultural Project (ICRP).

**Environment and Ecology:**

Students in the Environment and Ecology program will enroll in the equivalent of 6 units of courses in the fall. Students must enroll in one Spanish Conversation and Composition course to be determined by a placement exam. Additionally, all students will take *Ecosistemas y Biodiversidad en Ecuador*. This course will provide the knowledge and background necessary for the excursions to Tiputini, the Galapagos and other regions of Ecuador. All students will take a Service Learning course as well. Environment and Ecology students will also register for *Programa Investigación de Campo* (BIOE02) which includes both the Tiputini and GAIAS/Galápagos field projects, plus two electives of the student’s choosing; at least one of which should be another ECL/BIO course.

Hugo Valdebenito, the Environment & Ecology coordinator at USFQ, will register all E & E participants in *Prog. Invest. de Campo* (BIOE02).

In addition to enrollment in required university courses during the university’s fall semester, students will participate in several required field study trips designed to give them exposure to a variety of Ecuadoran ecosystems. Following the completion of courses, participants will complete a directed Environmental Field Study project at several locations in the rainforest: Tiputini Biodiversity Station, Napo river, Limoncocha, and at USFQ’s campus in the Galápagos, GAIAS. Additional information regarding the Environment & Ecology program can be found on page 44.
EMAIL

USFQ has wireless service almost everywhere on campus, so you will have access to email. However, it may not be at the same level of convenience that you are accustomed to. As an international student you will be allowed to connect your smartphone to the campus WiFi, however, domestic students on campus are not permitted to do so. The OPI can enable this for you if you stop by their offices.

There are a few small computer labs with mostly PCs and some Mac equipment. You may open an account at USFQ during orientation or locate an Internet café in Quito. As of this printing, USFQ does not charge a fee for email accounts but requires a USFQ ID card to access and use the facilities. There are no printers in the USFQ labs but you can save your documents to on a USB stick and take them to the Xerox Center for printing.

INTEGRATIVE CULTURAL PROJECT

If you are participating in the long-term liberal arts program, you will conduct an Integrative Cultural Project (ICRP). This project will provide you with an opportunity to explore an aspect of the local culture in a more direct, experiential manner. Program staff will brief you on the ICRP soon after you arrive and you can start identifying organizations at that time. The hands-on work will be done as a part of the Service Learning/PASEC course that you will take in the fall. Program staff will assist you in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the project; however you are ultimately responsible for developing and creating your ICRP project and paper. Do not delay in discussing your ideas or in soliciting ideas from them—you’ll have lots of details needing your attention if your project is to be productive. You should plan to write the ICRP final paper of 8—10 pages written in Spanish in December and January. You will also submit a one-page abstract of your project in English for distribution on campus in Kalamazoo.

Each study abroad site has unique conditions, practices particular to the community, and specific limitations for the ICRP. For example, in Ecuador, placements in medical services or hospital settings are typically not possible.

Remember, the current ICRP handbook, as well as ICRP examples are posted on the CIP website at: https://reason.kzoo.edu/cip/ICRP/. There are also some examples on pages 28-31.

As mentioned above, the hands-on portion of the integrative cultural project is built into a service learning class for the LA students. The class will introduce combine a theoretical learning component with service hours to create and integral learning experience about Ecuador’s social reality. Your ICRP will build on your work and the knowledge gained through this class, and you will choose some aspect of Ecuadorian culture that you wish to research in a more direct, experiential manner. Conducting such a project offers you a way to get to know the host culture using a variety of methods and in a more intimate fashion. How productive and fruitful your
experience is will depend on how much time and thought you put into the planning and how much you choose to commit yourself.

Six distinctive features characterize the ICRP projects, regardless of where they are completed, and should guide you in the selection and implementation of your particular project—

1. **Emphasis on “hands on” human interaction**—your project should allow you to interact with local people outside of the usual academic environment in a systematic, integrated way.

2. **Choice of the Project Topic, Type, and Scope**—the project should reflect your own goals, interests, and skills. Although you will need to consult with the local project coordinator who will ultimately approve your topic, you may exercise wide latitude in selecting the sort of project you wish to pursue in the host city; however, the project should give you an opportunity to apply what you are experiencing to your academic experience and to interact with a diverse group of people within the local culture.
   a. Service and volunteer projects
   b. Cultural externships or internships—participation in some facet of the local culture Life histories

3. **Choice of Methodology**—in consultation with the project coordinator, you’ll have wide latitude with respect to the information-gathering method(s) you choose to employ in your project.

4. **Systematic Research** (cf: Describe, Interpret, Evaluate, Validate, Act)
   a. Consistent journaling
   b. Painstaking interpretation

5. **Cultural Insight** (cf: DIEVA)
   a. Insight into the particular cultural activity or aspect you’ve selected
   b. Insight into the larger culture and/or social structure of the host country

6. **Advising and Mentoring**—from a local project coordinator and also a site supervisor
   a. Selection of topics and methods
   b. Introductions and first contacts
   c. Review of journal notes
   d. Interpretation
GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR ICRPS

- What is the main activity of the placement? What was produced?
- What are the goals and mission of the organization?
- Where does this particular organization stand in relation to similar ones in the city? In the region? In the state? In the country?
- Whom does this organization serve?
- How do people view this organization and its mission?
- What problems and tasks are to be accomplished?
- How was this done?
- How successful is the organization?
- What are the basic skills and knowledge needed to work for this organization?
- What would be a typical day or week in the organization?
- What were your responsibilities?
- What contribution did you make to help the organization achieve its goals?

The following is a list of ICRPs, including the locations and activities that students performed and discussed in their final papers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>ICRP Title</th>
<th>Abstract/Synopsis</th>
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<tr>
<td>Universidad San Francisco</td>
<td>Decentralizacion medica y</td>
<td>Ecuador is both a country with incredibly distinctive regional identies and a largely centralized health care system; despite recent initiatives,</td>
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<td>de Quito</td>
<td>los pueblos rurales</td>
<td>problems with the most basic care persist in rural areas and among indigenous communities. This trend is far more pronounced in regards to cancer and other</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>serious illnesses that require intensive and costly attention. In this essay, I aim to explore the infrastructure of health care in Ecuador, how it</td>
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<td>differs between urban centers and remote villages, and the ways this affects the lives of the seriously ill, while examining the impact of charitable</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>organizations such as Fundacion Por Una Vida, the program with which I worked, and determining the ways in which they fall short of providing complete</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>coverage. Then, I make suggestions of broad but measurable actions to take in order to combat the subtle geographical discrimination inherent in an underfunded and</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>centralized system of public health.</td>
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Plan Colombia was a massive program that the United States created alongside the Ecuadorian government as a means to end the violence that the country was facing everyday by the drug trade. This paper looks into Plan Colombia’s budget, promises, increased violence at the border, and fumigation program. Then I look more into depth at two aspects, the violence and fumigations. Including an interview that I had with a member of la Asamblea Permanente de Derechos Humanos (APDH) del Ecuador to see his viewpoint of Plan Colombia. During which he talks about the problems of Plan Colombia and ways in which he believes the fight against the drug trade should be fought. At the end I give a few of my thoughts as to what new path Plan Colombia should take and how it can go about getting the funding.

After being surrounded by Ecuadorian musicians in Masmusika for the past 6 months, I began to wonder what the music education system was like in this country. Therefore, I began interviewing employees about their musical past in the school system. An interesting pattern I came across was that almost all private schools offer mandatory music classes, where the public schools did not offer any at all. But what importance does this hold on students and their lives? This question lead me to research the affects of music not only on the human body and mind, but also in the classroom. The results I found were not surprising. Music has a beneficial impact on a variety of brain functions, including memory, IQ, reading age, personal expression, and more. I then found that including music in the classroom could also benefit the educational process. For example, playing comforting music in the background provides a welcoming environment for the students to learn in. Also, music can be used to create a sense of family in the class. By choosing a theme song or daily song to sing, the class can feel more together. Summed up, the benefits of both musical education and the existence of music in everyday learning are limitless.
For my project I worked with and got to know urban street kids through the Fundación Proyecto Salesiano Chicos de la Calle, tutoring them in academic reinforcement, guiding and accompanying them in recreational activities, providing integral attention to the boys living in the transitory shelter, organizing formative workshops, and visiting the organization’s families and child laborers working around the city while keeping an eye out for new families to invite. Searching for statistics and conducting research about the existing social conditions that cause children to head to the streets and start working helped me to better understand their everyday situations. Talking with the wonderful psychologists and social worker at the shelter both with and without the kids helped me to understand where their aggression and penchant for mischief derives from and how it can be curbed with guidance and compassion. The goal of my project was to give my time and attention to kids in need of whatever help they can get, to make Quito’s ‘invisible’ population the one that I care about the most, and to learn more so that I can continue to spread the message. In the end I learned so much more from them than I could ever have taught.

The Humane Society estimates that over seventy thousand puppies and kittens are born every day in the United States, while only ten thousand humans are born each day. Meaning that for ever human there are seven domestic animals in need of a home. The math is impossible, there is no way to find homes for all of these animals. The overpopulation of dogs and cats throughout the world leads to the spread of disease, including rabies. These animals are out on the streets suffering and struggling to survive. Just one female cat and her litter can lead to over four hundred thousand births in under ten years; and just one dog and her litter can lead to over three hundred thousand births in the same amount of time. Every year, in the United States alone, over fifteen million dogs and cats are euthanized. The problem is even worse in Ecuador. Even with Ecuador’s small size, almost as many dogs and cats are born each year. Through the education of the people and the spaying and neutering of our dogs and cats, we can slowly fix this problem. This paper describes the problem, citing statistics, in depth. It gives anecdotal reports of how the people of Ecuador are effected by the overpopulation of dogs and cats, and offers long term solutions to the problem.
Our education system needs reform. I say this not only from research and analysis, but I believe this on a fundamental level stemming from how my personal education was approached. Public schools around the world have neglected the very thing that separates us from many other forms of life, our ability to have innovative and creative thoughts of use. Our innate creativity is what shapes the world that we live in, but the current public education system has neglected this fact in pursuit of a more traditional measurement of intelligence. The world of the new century is one of the most stimulating time in history, info-graphics, technology, climate change, politics, religion, culture; all these things have become part of our globalization, which makes the future impossible to predict. So how can we educate the next generation? Creativity is the key to adaptation in this new world. We can no longer squander creative talent based on the assumption that our students will never get a job in such a field, an assumption stemming from the industrial revolution. We can no longer structure our schools like we used to structure factories. We can no longer drug our kids so they may pass easier through the systematic feeding of information that is our public school system.

This paper serves as the end result of a 100 hour service learning project at the Fundación Refugio Casa Matilde. It covers the current trends in crisis center resource capacities for domestic violence in Ecuador. Observations, analysis, and recommendations are included in a personal account of how this safe house provides services to its clients.

This paper outlines six Ecuadorian men’s current involvement in anti-machista spaces and organizations. These men actively meet in men’s groups to promote gender equality in Ecuadorian society. My work was completed with contacts from CEPAM, Cascos Rosas, and a men’s group that met monthly. Through semi-structured and informal interviews and discussions I explore reasons for involvement in these groups, analyze individual self-identification terminology, and discuss social consequences for involvement. This work also explores sub-topics such as gender, feminism, cultural values, generational differences, and violence against women. This work fills in gaps in current literature regarding positive ‘pro-feminist’ men’s work in relation to Latino men’s identities and machismo.
ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY FIELD STUDY PROJECT

If you are participating in the ecology program, you will conduct a field study during the visits of several places in the rainforest: Napo river, Limponcocha, Tiputini Biodiversity Research Station well as at USFQ’s campus in the Galápagos, GAIAS. For more specific information regarding the ecology program, please see page 44.

LIVING IN QUITO AND CUMBAYA

THE HOMESTAY EXPERIENCE

K students are typically housed individually with Ecuadorian families. Most of the homes will be middle- to upper-middle class, but the "homestay" experiences may be radically different from each other. Some families may have hosted exchange students in the past, others not. Some "families" may consist of two parents and small children, or an older couple with college-aged children, or an elderly widow with no children at home. Whatever your family structure is, it will be your first introduction to Ecuadorian society and culture. You have the potential to improve your Spanish as you interact daily with your new family.

In Ecuador, the family unit is typically more extended than often found in the US. Ecuadorians tend to have close relationships and live in the same city with their grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. In general, children in Ecuador grow up within a broader family structure than we do here in the US. Not surprisingly, then, a high value is placed on the family and on sustaining those relationships.

ADJUSTING TO YOUR FAMILY

There may be some new issues for you as you adjust to living with an Ecuadorian family. Some things may be very different than what you’re accustomed to here in the US. As you will no longer be living the independent life of the residence halls in the US where you can come and go as you please, be prepared to give up a little of that freedom in Ecuador so you can better integrate with your family. They may worry if you stay out late, so early on in the program, have a conversation about what time they expect you to be home. Your family will most likely want you to accompany them on certain visits, activities, or excursions. Take advantage of such cultural opportunities as they provide an ideal way to get to know the different aspects of the culture first-hand. As with most aspects of family life, you may not have advance notice about these opportunities.

Adapting to a different family lifestyle will take some time. There will most likely be instances in which you are aware that your family does not understand why you act the way you do, and vice versa. Listen and observe closely; often, messages are given in a non-verbal manner. Also, pay attention to how your Ecuadorian peers act and relate to others and follow their model.
HELPFUL HINTS FOR A POSITIVE FAMILY EXPERIENCE

- Keep your expectations minimal.
- Communicate with your family about everything!
- Always check and double-check when the family expects you to be home: at night, for meals, for family outings.
- Speak Spanish at all times, even when talking with other US friends, unless you are speaking in a private place.
- Don't hesitate to tell them if you don't understand, and ask them to be patient as you try to improve your Spanish.
- Respect the rules and customs of your family (schedules, opinions, religious beliefs, etc.)
- Ask your family for permission to have friends over. When you do have guests, entertain them in the same way that your family entertains theirs.
- Expect to make your own bed, keep your room clean, and offer to help out, as you would in the US when visiting relatives.
- Inform the Resident Director immediately of any problems relating to your safety and well-being.

Finally, at the end of your homestay experience and after you return to the US, write your family a letter letting them know that you arrived home safely and that you appreciate their sharing their home with you during your stay. Not to do so would be considered very rude by Ecuadorian standards. In the past, families have refused to take another US student because of hurt feelings.

In some cases, if you are doing something that is regarded as culturally offensive by your family, you will most likely not be directly told by the person who objects to your behavior. Unlike current US culture, direct, confrontational communication is not common in Ecuador. If you're aware that you may be doing something culturally insensitive, simply ask your family. If you're not comfortable doing that, ask an Ecuadorian friend in the university what he or she suggests you do, or ask Tania Ledergerber, Hugo Valdebenito or another staff member at the university. You can save yourself a lot of heartache if you do what you can to help clear up any unintentional cultural misunderstandings when they first occur.

You'll find that different expectations exist of your role as a guest and family member, ones that are quite different than what you're used to in your own living situation in the US. Women may be expected to be home at a certain hour, or simply to arrive earlier than their male peers. Men may
be expected to escort female friends home after an evening out. There may be different rules regarding use of the bathroom and shower, and you will be expected to be home for meals. Many families will have maids or other employees working in the home. These will all be new things which will require some adjustments on your part.

When you're not sure about what your family expects from you, ask, ask, and ask again. Keep the communication lines open, even if it means fumbling around in Spanish. If your family and friends know you're trying to learn the social norms, they will be happy to help you along. If you should have serious difficulties with your family, don't hesitate to talk with Tania Ledergerber or Natalie Pernas. If a move needs to be made, program staff will help arrange that.

**USFQ EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS LIVING IN HOMESTAYS**

As a visiting international student at USFQ, you are expected to accept the following commitments during your stay with the local family—

- To accept and respect the norms of living with a family
- To participate in activities with the family
- To respect the religious beliefs of the family
- To speak with the family about your dietary preferences and respect those of the family
- To speak Spanish with members of the family
- To inform the family when you plan to return late to the home or to miss a meal
- To advise the family where you will be when you plan to travel outside the city
- To respect the family’s customs when you want to invite a guest to visit you
- To advise the family if you would like to cook
- To respect the family’s norms of security with regard to doors and windows
- To guard the keys to the house, to inform them if you lose the keys, and to return the keys at the conclusion of your stay
- To discuss the use of the family’s telephone, to make local calls in moderation
- Use a calling card or collect service when calling internationally
- To use hot water for showers or baths in moderation
- To respect the established relationship between the family and any household employees

USFQ expects host families to abide by a similar statement of commitment to provide accommodation and meals, to assist and orient the student in being a part of the family, to speak Spanish with the student, and to respect the student’s beliefs and customs. Host families are
compensated for the accommodation and meals as is customary and in keeping with local arrangements.

MEALS
On weekdays, you will eat breakfast and a light supper with your family, and lunch at the university. Your lunches at the university will be covered by a stipend that you will receive from Kalamazoo College before you depart for the program. It will be important that you budget this stipend to last the duration of your program. On weekends you will eat all meals at your homestay. Meals will be provided during program excursions.

People in Ecuador generally eat three meals a day. Desayuno will be lighter than most breakfasts in the US and can often be coffee, milk, bread and butter, or sweet rolls. Comida or almuerzo is the main meal of the day and includes at least two courses. You might start with soup, continue with rice and meat, fish, or chicken, served with vegetables, and then dessert. There might be a light snack of coffee, cheese, and bread in the late afternoon, followed by a light supper at around 8 or 9 p.m. Cena might be as simple as coffee and bread. When you first arrive, ask your family what their customary meal schedule is.

The Ecuadorian cuisine includes influences of both Spanish and indigenous cooking. The staples of the Ecuadorian diet are starches, especially rice and potatoes, and you'll find that various legumes, stews, and soups are common. Seafood from the coast is also plentiful. Be sure and try the empanadas and llapingachos (potato pancakes).

DOMESTIC HELP
It's extremely likely that your family will have an employee in the home to cook, clean the house, and perhaps take care of the children. Most of you will not be accustomed to having a “maid” in the house, so you may be surprised at the role she will play in your new home.

There have been students in the past who have been uncomfortable with the way the family treated the maid in their house. For example, some have heard members of the family yell at the maid for dropping something at the table. If such a situation occurs in your house, you may feel uncomfortable, especially if you witness the scene. There may be other circumstances that prove to be more disturbing, and at some point, you may feel like intervening, whether that means speaking to your host parents or personally comforting the maid. However, please don't put yourself in the middle of a situation between the maid and your family. To do so would be highly inappropriate culturally and would either jeopardize your relationship with your family or jeopardize the position of the maid in the household. While some behaviors may seem incomprehensible to you, they may be the standard in Ecuador. If you have a question about a
specific situation in your home, ask Tania Ledergerber, OPI staff, or one of your Ecuadorian friends for assistance.

**GIFTS**

It is customary to bring a gift to your host family. As you will not know the exact composition of your Ecuadorian family, you might consider bringing group gifts. Children and adults alike often appreciate chocolates, for example. Some good ideas include:

- T-shirts, sweatshirts, or other items with Kalamazoo College logos
- Cookbooks/American recipes
- Chocolates or other candy
- Candle holders with candles for a dining room table
- American artwork- posters are good
- CDs of American music (jazz, blues, etc.)
- Blueberry or cherry items
- Maple syrup

Show your pictures of home and ask to see theirs. Talk about your country and ask questions about Ecuador. You will probably find that Ecuadorians are proud of their country and willing to give you a lot of historical information. Other good topics of conversation include politics, cuisine, and religion. Avoid talking negatively about any aspect of Ecuadorian life.

**LAUNDRY**

Laundry will vary from family to family. Sometimes, a maid may handle most washing and ironing though you may be required to wash your own undergarments. Otherwise your host mother may do it. Keep in mind that most families will not have a dryer, so it will take longer to get your clothes back than it does at a laundromat. Also, if you have nicer clothing that needs to be dry-cleaned, you will have to pay for that. If you have items of clothing that must be washed gently, plan on doing that yourself.

**TELEPHONE USE**

This year students will be provided with an Ecuadorian cell phone SIM card with a monthly plan at no additional cost. You will also have the option to purchase a fairly cheap cell phone. Please see the USFQ Orientation Handbook for details.

Wifi Apps, Skype and other Voice Over Internet Protocols are also becoming more and more common as a way to communicate with family and friends around the world. Computer-to-computer, Skype is free. Computer-to-land-line, there is a fee, and the cheapest way to make these
calls is to use an internet café. WhatsApp has also increased in popularity as well as free international phone call apps like MagicJack.

In Ecuador, there are charges made on all local calls. As they can be expensive, please limit the time you spend making phone calls if you use your family’s home phone. The telephone bill is not itemized, so it is most appropriate for you to keep a record of your calls (including the length of time you spent per call) and offer to pay the family for calls made. Keep in mind that it is usually cheaper for someone in the US to call you in Ecuador than it is for you to call him or her. It is recommended that you arrange a day and time for your family or friends back home to call or Skype you in Quito. Also, it is important to know that it is far more expensive to call a cell phone than it is to call someone's home. Keep this in mind when using your family's phone.

LEAVING YOUR HOMESTAY AND DESIGNATED VACATION PERIODS
Room and board is covered only while the academic program is in session. During extended vacation breaks such as the December holiday or spring break, no board costs are paid to the families, so you will be expected to find accommodation elsewhere. You must vacate your homestay as indicated in the program calendar at the winter break and at the end of the academic program. If you violate this policy and stay on during vacations or after the end of the program, you must pay the appropriate fee determined by the Center for International Programs.

ADAPTING TO ECUADORIAN CULTURE
Over the period of your stay in Ecuador, you will probably learn the most from daily living in a different culture. For in the day-to-day experiences—the morning bus ride, a trip to the market, a meal with your family—lie the real challenges, frustrations, and joys of living in a new cultural environment. Many former participants have said that a primary reason for choosing to study abroad was the desire to live in and learn about a new culture.

DOING WITHOUT
In addition to adjusting to the conditions mentioned above, there are things you will have to give up to live in Ecuador—and this may be hard at first. Eventually, though, you may realize that you don't necessarily “need” what you thought you did. Not everyone misses the same things and different people react differently to the sacrifices they must make. For some people, not having their own car may prove frustrating since possibilities for travel will be limited. For others it might be the unavailability of certain foods (specific types of herbal tea, for example), or not being able to maintain a vegetarian diet. For some people it's hard to find clothes or shoes that fit or suit their taste. Large shoes are extremely difficult to find in Ecuador, for example.

You will also have to adapt to a new city and a new community. This means using a map to learn where things are and making use of public transportation. In a new community where you don't
know anyone, your usual support systems will not be available. It's important to consider beforehand how you will cope in such circumstances. Your routine will be different. During the homestay, you may spend evenings and weekends with your family instead of going out. You will be required to give up some of the freedom and flexibility to which you are accustomed. You may find structure where you don't want it and none where you do. This is a normal part of cross-cultural learning and adaptation.

Finally, you will have to give up some control over your health. Sickness—especially that which you've never experienced before (like food poisoning)—is inevitable. It's quite common for one's digestive system to have a negative reaction to a completely new environment—new food, new water, etc. It's not uncommon for people to have at least one bout of food poisoning, which typically involves vomiting and diarrhea. You might also find yourself more susceptible to other kinds of infections. A balanced diet and plenty of sleep will help you to maintain your health.

**ECUADOR: THE SECOND CULTURE**

In addition to adapting to Ecuador as a country, you will be learning to adjust to a second culture. Learning to live in a new culture requires a great deal more than a list of do's and don'ts, or a brief description of the cultural traits of a society. For one thing, any culture is much too complex to narrow down to a definitive description. Descriptions can describe general characteristics, but they will not explain each specific encounter. Secondly, and more importantly, adaptation has as much to do with understanding oneself and one's own culture as it does with understanding a different culture.

As individuals, we are cultural beings with ways of behaving and perceiving which we do not always identify as springing from our culture. It is when we attempt to understand, or become a part of, another culture that we come to see that many of our values, beliefs and behaviors stem from our own cultural background. Interaction in a new cultural environment can cause conflict both within oneself and between oneself and the new culture. Some of this conflict is inevitable. However, by understanding yourself as a product of your own culture and of your own personal background, you will have a much easier time observing your interactions and learning to adapt to a new set of behavioral ground rules.

The task of culture learning requires a high tolerance for ambiguity and a patient willingness to work through culture shock in a constructive manner. You must be willing to learn from situations where you may have miscommunicated or failed at communication. You will be expected to examine how their own cultural expectations may have interfered with interpretation, to use your observation skills to pick up on other clues as to what may be happening, and to reserve judgment while remaining tolerant of ambiguity until you reach understanding. Keeping your sense of humor is also key.
Learning a second culture not only affords students an understanding of the new culture derived from first-hand experience, it, at the same time, gives them an awareness of their own culture than they never have had before. With familiar surroundings and friends taken away, students are led to examine not only their culture, but themselves as well. One student participating in an intensive study abroad program wrote, “I’m learning to enjoy being with myself, independent and alone from lifelong cultural props. It’s great!” Such awareness of one’s own culture and self ultimately allows students to live more responsibly as members of the global community.

GETTING TO KNOW ECUADOR

One of the best ways to start preparing for your experience is to do some background reading and research on Ecuador. Familiarize yourself with the current political situation and educational systems, historical background, current events, customs, and cultural norms. It’s important to know, for example, that Ecuador and Perú fairly recently signed a peace agreement for their common border after years of conflict, how the volcano Pichincha is behaving, or recent developments in the economic and political situation of the country, like the formation of a new Constitution.

Go to your library or ask to talk to a faculty or staff member who has had experience in Ecuador. Or arrange to talk with one of the students who have been there in the past or an Ecuadorian student on campus. They know what it's like to be in your shoes as you try to imagine what in the world the next six or so months will hold. In case you don't personally know any former participants, contact the Center for International Programs.


KNOW WHAT’S GOING ON IN THE US

Some people have had the embarrassing experience of learning that people abroad seem to know more about US history and politics than they themselves do. You can expect to be asked your opinion about current events and US politics. You can also expect to hear the opinions of others, and not all of them will be complimentary of the US. Should such a situation arise, the best advice
is to remain respectful, even when disagreeing, and to resist the temptation to criticize Ecuador, as you are a guest. Start paying attention to current events and continue to do so while you’re in Ecuador.

**SPEAKING SPANISH**

Probably all of you are feeling Spanish-language anxiety—relax! It will be okay if you walk off the plane and don’t understand a word your host family says to you. Everyone who has been abroad where another language is spoken has lived through that experience. There are, however, some great opportunities to practice your Spanish here before you go. Some ideas for practicing Spanish include: renting Spanish and Latin American movies, listening to Spanish and Latin American music, and practicing your Spanish with the Spanish and Latin American students on campus.

**ECUADORIAN SPANISH**

You’ll find Ecuadorian Spanish has its own particular nuances and vocabulary. It may take a while for your ear to adjust to the accent. Ecuadorian Spanish contains influences of Quichua, a language spoken by indigenous peoples in the Pichincha region, which includes Quito. For example, a baby or child is referred to as a guagua, which is a Quichua word. Another word often used by Ecuadorians is ¡Chévere!, which generally means “great” or “cool.”

Ecuadorians tend to use the diminutive often, saying “cafécito” instead of “café”, for example.

With respect to the use of tú in Ecuador, be careful of the tendency to tutear, or automatically address people who you don’t know intimately with tú. As a general rule, address everyone you meet, except children and fellow students, by usted. While the tú form is used among close friends and family, using it inappropriately can be taken as an insult.

Avoid speaking English in the presence of Spanish-speakers. If you’re in a public place or in a group of people that includes at least one person who doesn’t speak English, use Spanish. Speaking a language that’s not understood by people in the group is culturally offensive and potentially very isolating. If you do have to communicate in English, for whatever reason, in front of a non-English speaker, ask permission first. Also, while in public places, including local transportation, speak Spanish when at all possible, unless you want to be taken for a tourist.

**GENDER RELATIONS**

You’ll most likely observe different gender dynamics in Ecuador. While men may be dominant in the workplace, it will be women who have control in the home. Depending on the context, relationships between young men and women (even those in college) can be more formal than here in the US. Dating patterns differ between Ecuador and the US, and to go out as a couple in Ecuador is oftentimes a much more serious step in a relationship than it is here in the US. Most young people go out in groups, rather than in pairs, to clubs, discos, and cafes. Also keep in mind
that it is generally inappropriate to invite someone of the opposite gender to your room, even if he or she is a good friend. Always ask your host family about their rules and follow them.

Women should be prepared for numerous comments, *piropos*, made by strangers on the street. They can take the form of whistling, hissing, other noises, or direct comments, but they are almost always non-threatening, and the best advice for dealing with them is to simply ignore them, as do Ecuadorian women. Nevertheless, men may also be the target of uninvited attention while walking around Quito or when traveling. It can be very frustrating to be noticed this way on a regular basis, and another good idea is to learn how locals react to this type of attention.

YOUR RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES

YOUR RETURN FLIGHT
You need to check your ticket and itinerary before you leave the U.S. and make sure you have the correct dates. If, while in country, you should wish to change your return date, you must do so directly with the airline or Travel Leaders. If you have any questions about travel, please call Travel Leaders (800.633.6401) before you go.

If you're interested in requesting a special meal (i.e., vegetarian/vegan, kosher, low-fat) from the airline, call the airline office directly at least one week before your departure.

PREPARING FOR YOUR RETURN TO THE US
As the end of your program approaches, you will likely experience a wide range of emotions and reactions. Just as you needed to prepare for your stay in Quito before leaving the United States, you will also need to take care of many important details as your program in Quito comes to an end. As you are preparing to leave, please remember the following:

- Confirm your return flight 72 hours in advance at the airline office or by phone in Quito.
- Leave behind any agricultural products or items made of animal hides—you will not be able to pass through US customs.
- Set aside some cash for the trip home – remember you will have a departure fee/tax to pay at the airport.
- Acknowledge the hospitality of your host family by sending them a thank you letter once you arrive home.
- Also, the Center for International Programs’ Peer Advisers – seniors who have returned from studying abroad that organize campus events and help advise students on their study abroad experience – put together a list of recommended things to do several weeks BEFORE you leave for the US, and before you do any post-program travel. These are great things to do to prepare yourself for the end of the program and for the reverse culture shock you may experience when
you return to the United States. The Peer Advisers, who have experienced the reintegration process, wish that they, themselves, had done the following:

- Take photos of your campus, living space, neighborhood, and surrounding areas so you can remember them and share them with your family and friends back home.
- Definitely set time aside for thorough ‘last’ goodbyes with friends and host families.
- Enjoy some of your favorite foods that you may not be able to get in the United States.
- Re-visit a place you went to when you first arrived and reflect on how that place feels differently now.

Start thinking of ways to be upfront with your family and friends back home about how you are feeling – write emails or make phone calls to share what you will miss from study abroad and ask them to be patient with you when you have ups and downs as you reintegrate.

RETURNNING HOME

Contrary to popular belief, returning from an extended period abroad can be equally or even more stressful and challenging than beginning your study abroad experience. You may have changed in several ways during your experience. Coming home can be difficult. Just as when you were struggling to adapt to Ecuadorian culture, it is wise to give yourself some time to adjust when you return. Intercultural transition research suggests you allow yourself the same amount of time back home as you had away in order to adjust. Each of the staff members of the Center for International Programs has experienced similar challenges and we encourage you to talk with us or someone in the Counseling Center if you have significant troubles adjusting when you return to campus.

In the first week of the spring quarter back on campus, we will invite you to attend a reentry celebration, where faculty, administrative staff, and international students gather to welcome you back. We provide many additional opportunities for you to continue your study abroad experience through activities and functions on campus. You’ll want to be sure to add study abroad to your Portfolio, too. We welcome your participation and look forward to your return.

READJUSTMENT

Going home is usually a very exciting prospect. Most students look forward to seeing family and friends they have missed, eating food they haven’t had for so long and enjoying activities that may not have been possible during study abroad.

Remember that returning home is also a transition very similar to your arrival in Ecuador. Just like your arrival, you can expect to feel frustration, anxiety and confusion at home, on your campus and with your friends. Craig Storti puts it this way in *The Art of Crossing Cultures*: 
“The problem is this word home. It suggests a place and a life all set up and waiting for us; all we have to do is “move-in.” But home isn’t a place we merely inhabit; it’s a lifestyle we construct (wherever we go), a pattern of routines, habits and behaviors associated with certain people, places and objects—all confined to a limited area or neighborhood. We can certainly construct a home back in our own culture—just as we did abroad—but there won’t be one waiting for us when we arrive…In other words, no one goes home; rather we return to our native country and in due course we create a home.”

At the foundation of this transition is the task of determining what to do with the changes that have occurred while you were away and the changes that have taken place within you as a result of your time in Ecuador. Life for your family, friends and teachers probably will not be the same as when you departed, but you were not there to gradually adjust to those changes with them. And they have not been able to get used to the things that are different about you.

Hardly anyone avoids the discomfort of this period of growth, but the good news is you will eventually find a way to include your new ideas, skills and outlook in your life back in the U.S. Here are a few questions to consider before your return. Your answers may help you recognize the changes that have occurred during your sojourn.

☐ What have I learned about Ecuador’s culture that I did not know previously? In what ways has this changed my view of Ecuador?

☐ By being abroad and able to compare my culture with a different culture, what have I learned about the history, values and traditions that make up my home culture?

☐ While I was away, what significant events have occurred in my country, my family, in my hometown, among my friends and on campus?

☐ How have my personal values changed because of my study abroad experience?

☐ In what ways have my stereotypes or biases changed?

☐ What new skills have I developed (e.g. adaptation skills, second language proficiency, sensitivity, etc) and how might I maintain them?

☐ How can I express these changes to my friends, family and teachers?

☐ What might I do to continue to deepen my understanding of Ecuador?

WHEN YOU’RE HOME . . . YOUR HEALTH

One of the first things you should do when you return home is to immediately schedule an appointment to see your physician. Arrange to have blood, urine, TB, and stool tests run. Many students have experienced prolonged illness beyond their return. Unfortunately, you’re not home
free when you step off the plane. Just like you had to do in Ecuador, you'll have to re-adjust to the food, water, and different microbes. Your system needs to restabilize itself. Be sure to let your physician know where you’ve been and any medications you’ve been taking.

**IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS AND ADDRESSES**

**US Embassy in Quito**  
Tel  
24 hour emergency  
Calling from the U.S.: (011-593-2) 398-5000  
After hours: (011-593-2) 398-5000 or (011-593-9) 9788-3222  
Calling from other Ecuadorian provinces: (02) 398-5000  
After hours: (02) 398-5000 or (09) 9788-3222  
Calling from landline in Quito or Pichincha province: 398-5000  
After hours: 398-5000 or (09) 9788-3222

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**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR THE ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY PROGRAM**

You’ll need specific materials for participating in the field study experiences during the Environment and Ecology of Ecuador program. The *Ciencias Ambientales* department staff at USFQ requires that you be prepared for field study by bringing some items with you from the States and by purchasing other equipment while in Quito.
ABSOLUTE—MUST BRING ITEMS FROM THE UNITED STATES

- 2 pair pants for field work—lightweight pants that dry fast are best
- Dri-fit shirts
- Water sandals (like Tevas)
- Long, thick socks for rubber boots, which you will wear a lot
- 2-3 old, long-sleeved, lightweight shirts or t-shirts
- Polar fleece
- Minimal supply of underclothes (non-cotton is best, although women will want a cotton lining to aid in breathe-ability)
- Flashlight or headlamp with replacement bulbs
- 3 sets alkaline batteries for flashlight
- Swiss Army-type knife
- Digital camera or camera with film for use in dark, damp conditions (if you prefer disposable cameras, they are much cheaper in the US)
- Variety of sizes of Ziplock or comparable self-sealing bags (especially large ones)
- Small high-power binoculars (REQUIRED for EE Students)
- Flip flops
- Small quick-dry towel
- Rain poncho or light-weight waterproof jacket

Optional Items to Bring from the United States:

- Pants that zip off into shorts
- Compass and altimeter
- Laptop computer—convenient but not necessary—do so at your own risk and insure it
- Sleeping pad and bag (cost approximately $4/day to rent a sleeping bag in Quito)
- Magnifying glass with at least four powers
- Nalgene or other sturdy water bottle (better to purchase in the US)

Items to Purchase in Quito:

- Rubber boots (if you wear smaller than a size 10 ½ mens—if larger, purchase in the States)
- Insect repellant (non-DEET difficult to find)
- Spiral-bound field notebook with graph paper, 3 #2 pencils and one indelible marker, like Sharpie®
QUITO 17-18

- Canteen or water bottle (Nalgene not easy to find in Ecuador)
- Small backpack or fanny pack
- Toilet paper
- Baby powder

**GENERAL ACADEMIC INFORMATION**

The format of classes includes a mix of lecture and classroom discussion. Most classes meet four days a week for one hour at a time.

**TIPUTINI BIODIVERSITY STATION and GAIAS FIELD RESEARCH PROJECT**

At the conclusion of the semester, you will participate in a required field research project at the Tiputini Biodiversity Station (TBS) in the tropical rainforest of the Ecuadorian Amazon. Situated on the Tiputini River, TBS is a collaboration of Universidad San Francisco de Quito and Boston University bordering the Yasuní Biosphere Reserve, a national reserve of Ecuador. An extraordinary scientific resource, TBS was highlighted in the February 1999 edition of *National Geographic Magazine* and is the site of considerable ecological research and international interest.

It is also, however, self-contained and extremely isolated, as a rainforest research facility should be. You should be prepared to show your yellow *World Health Organization* vaccination “yellow” card to gain entry to the area and expect to adjust to a considerably-different visual and audible environment. While at the station, you must follow very specific rules for your behavior (such as “signing out” when you leave the base station and reporting for all meals) designed to ensure your safety and other regulations in place to protect the fragile environmental resource.

You will complete intensive field research at the station under the direction and guidance of Kalamazoo College program staff and TBS personnel. At the conclusion of the field research project, you will return to Quito to write a paper in Spanish on the topic of your investigation. You will also submit a one-page abstract of your project, written in English, which will be shared with the Biology department in Kalamazoo. More information about TBS and research options will be provided by Hugo Valdebenito, Tania Ledergerber and program staff in Quito. The inclusion of field work conducted at USFQ’s station in the Galápagos Islands, GAIAS, will be discussed after you arrive in Quito.

According to Thomas Nelson, K’09, “The project is just an excuse for us to get out into the rain forest and experience both the forest and how all the researchers there live and work. It’s a fantastic opportunity, although I’d say the main purpose shouldn’t necessarily be learning about what you’re studying but more about the forest as a whole and the experiences of the folks at Tiputini. We’re allowed, and must, choose our own projects and have them approved by our
ecology professor. I researched how bullet ants perceive threats while foraging. It was a cool idea but two weeks in the rain forest isn't enough time to actually get a good project going.”

ADVICE FROM PAST-PARTICIPANTS

RECOMMENDED THINGS TO DO

“Hang out in Parque Carolina and play Frisbee or soccer, etc. It is only safe however during the day and in groups; the locals advised us not to go alone and not at night.”

“If you have rubber boots bring them to Ecuador! Dri-fit stuff is really good too, both hot and cold weather.”

“A day (or half-day) trip to old Quito with a group of friends is a really great way to see the historical buildings, especially the churches.”

“Go to the bullfights, ride a chiva, or take part in any of the typical “Fiestas de Quito” activities - not only will you be participating in Ecuadorian culture, you’ll also have a lot of fun!!!”

“Make friends with people your age from your host family and from the university. You can learn a lot from each other, and you’ll have someone to show you around!”

“Go to a soccer game!!! The enthusiasm of the fans and players is so much greater than it is here”

“Take lots of pictures. But, when photographing indigenous people, it is sometimes better to ask first - cultural sensitivity - because your flash might be stealing their soul or inflicting them with ‘mal de ojo.’”

“Be smart whenever you go out - try to stay in groups. Aside from safety, groups can have a lot of fun!”

“Go to the centro histórico for theater performances and to go to restaurants with spectacular views of the panecillo, like the vista hermosa.”
“Travel is wonderfully cheap, so don’t waste too much time in your room watching that $10 dollar bootleg season of House that you bought on the street corner.”

“In the Galápagos, take a private snorkeling tour (K does not pay for it). We saw an incredible number of large and spectacular sharks, rays and fish; we swam and played with sea lions! (well, they played with us; in the water they are the ones in control).”

“Advice for guys: definitely make a genuine effort to get to know Ecuadorians your own age either at school or your host siblings and their friends. This is truly the best way to get to know the language and culture. This advice is aimed at guys because Ecuadorians are far less likely to make the effort to get to know an American guy, although most are quite friendly once they see that an effort is being made.”

“A few friends and I hired a guide and climbed Cotopaxi which is the second largest mountain in Ecuador. This is not for everyone; I was in pretty good shape when I did this (I was on the track team at the University) and I found it very challenging, but it is one of my favorite things I did while in Ecuador (or anywhere else).”

“I’d recommend going to Cuenca and Loja. They’re 12 hours south of Quito and have great architecture. Both are smaller and friendlier than Quito, so it’s nice to wander around.”

*LIVING IN QUITO: CULTURE AND CITY LIFE*

“The excursions were the best aspect of the trip because we were able to obtain a more comprehensive view of Ecuador as a whole. We had time to experience the culture of not only urban Ecuador, but also of people living in more remote places like the Páramo, the Orient, and coastal regions. Just as important is the wildlife, both flora and fauna, that we had the chance to interact with.”

“The pollution and contamination (including noise pollution) [in Quito] was readily apparent and took a long time to get used to.”

“We spent two weeks in the jungle exploring and living a more simple, sustainable life. The amount of biodiversity we saw there was astounding and included organisms such as river dolphins, tapirs, and sloths. This was an experience unique to the E and E program in Ecuador.” Paige Howell K’10

“One great tradition not to be missed is New Years. My friends and I went to Canoa (a coastal town) and hung out on the beach. At night we participated in burning paper mache effigies of people that represent the past (either good or bad times) in order to look forward into the future. It was the coolest cultural tradition I saw there.”

“USFQ, the university that K students attend, is in a valley outside of Quito. It’s always warmer than Quito, so wear layers that you can remove upon arriving.”
“Ecuador has tons of “cabinas” where you can make relatively cheap calls back home to the U.S.”

“Most stores won’t break $20’s, so bring along tons of $1’s and $5’s.”

“People will have stereotypes of North Americans so be prepared”

“Transportation - All I have to say is: Learn quickly! I know getting charged 5 dollars for a taxi in the US is a bargain, but in Ecuador, you’re being taken advantage of.”

“Don’t be fooled by Ecuador’s size; it has a lot to offer. A day’s travel can take you from the beach, to snowy volcanoes, and then primary rain forest.”

“In Quito, you will be cold at night. Heavy sweaters or fleeces are quite comfortable at night. If it rains all day, it can even get down to the 40s at night (and they don’t bother with any central heating).”

“The E and E program is not for everyone. For example, the program is not for people who are not in at least somewhat decent health (physically and mentally) and/or are high maintenance. The program does not always have especially comfortable living conditions. On this program you have to not mind: uncomfortable sleeping conditions, getting dirty, cold showers, some degree of isolation, and long hikes with your pack.”

“Women have to be prepared for a lot of (unwanted) attention.”

“It is rude to toss items to people like you might toss a pen to your friend across the room; in Ecuador it is quite rude.”

“Greetings: men always greet other men with a handshake or a hug, depending on how close the relation is, and greet women with a kiss on the cheek. Women will always greet men and women with a kiss on the cheek. This takes a bit of getting used to, but it grows on you; I actually found I missed it when I came back to the United States.”

“Misunderstandings with language and cultural differences can be uncomfortable, more or less depending on what family you’re with and who within that family you’re talking to.”

“Holidays are very family-based. Expect to spend Christmas and New Years with your host family (if you’re invited, which you almost surely will be). My experience was incredible. Fiestas de Quito is an extremely social event at the beginning of December with concerts and all-night parties.”

“The E & E program travels all over. We went to the cloud forests on both the eastern and western Andean slopes, three unique páramos (Andean highlands), the coast and the rain forest. The excursions mainly consist of the group simply experiencing the diversity of these places, with some very choice insights from Vlasti (the professor who traveled with us), a botanist.”
THOUGHTFUL RESPONSES

“A couple of my favorite memories from the Jungle are: seeing river dolphins, fishing for piranhas in the same river we swim, and spending the night on the canopy tower in Tiputini.

“Brutal honesty: people are very open even to your face about physical appearance, something most Americans probably aren’t used to. For example, my host mother once told me that I was “guapo” but too skinny. It’s good to remember that it is all harmless and they don’t mean to hurt your feelings.”

RECOMMENDED PLACES TO VISIT

Panecillo (Do not visit the Panecillo alone or at night!)

La Mariscal is the clubbing district and is easily enjoyed when in groups. One great bar is Warholics. It has a pretty relaxed atmosphere and good drinks that are a little more pricey than some places but nowhere near as much as the United States.

A popular dance spot is Bungalow as well as MoVida. For guys there is some cover charge, so it’s not as good of a deal for them.

Plaza de las Americas has free wireless internet and the coffee shop Truck Stop

For LATE night eats, Hotdog González-Suarez is the best.

Mitad del Mundo: Monument located on the equator

Museo de Guayasamín

Centro Histórico

Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana

Teleférico (Do not stray from the teleférico park on any of the nearby paths that lead out onto the surrounding mountain side! Stay only directly at the teleférico park!!!)

There are a lot of cool cities surrounding Quito that Kalamazoo doesn’t organize group trips to visit... organize your own weekend trip to a nearby city with some of your Kalamazoo and Ecuadorian friends!

Trips to Baños are great for outdoor fun like rafting and the bars are pretty fun on the weekends.

Make sure to make a stop at Tapas and Vinos (all the wine and tapas you want for $20) in the Mariscal

Chupitos (bar) and Latitud Tapas y Vino (dinner and afterward) in La Mariscal are both great places to go at night.
Check out: Cuenca, Montañita, Cotopaxi, Quilotoa, Mindo, Puerto Lopez (and Isla de la Plata), Peru, Otavalo, and Atacames

TRAVEL ADVICE

“Most foreigners stick out, especially outside of Quito. You will be more of a target for petty thieves. It’s just something to be aware of and can most times be solved by simply not carrying anything worth much (remember, travel is cheap). You’ll learn when and where to pay attention to these things.”

“Go everywhere you can.”

COURSES AND ICRP

“For the excursions, sometimes we were hiking for hours over steep terrain; although almost no one had any real troubles, it was difficult for some, so be aware.”

“The classes at USFQ are very interesting and well taught, however be warned that classes may start 20 minutes late or that sometimes randomly canceled. USFQ is well known for its economics and business programs and even had the current president, Rafael Correa, as one of its economics professors.

“Remember – when selecting classes – you’re limited by the schedule of the mandatory seminars and ICRP.”

“I suggest taking political science and creative expression classes while abroad. Political science (ie: international relations) classes are especially interesting because in the US we only learn the US’ perspective.”

“Any of the art classes are great and the workshop hours are a great time to talk to Ecuadorian students in your class while weaving, painting, sculpting, or whatever.”

“I would definitely go for some classes unique to the university. For instance, my Volcanology class and Andean Anthropology class were not quite the typical university classes they might at first seem to be. Volcanology required around 4 trips or so to actual volcanoes, including to the peak of Quito’s own Pichincha, and to the base of the nearby Cotopaxi. Optional trips to visit fault lines and other volcanic areas were abundant. Andean Anthropology was by far my favorite class, as well as the most difficult for me. Class started off lecture based, but was soon handed over to the students to teach. Many of the students were indigenous Ecuadorians on scholarship at the University and they had many personal experiences to complement class material. The best part of the class was developing a personal field project. My project investigated the combination of Catholic and Indigenous beliefs concerning the currently active volcano Tungurahua in the city of Baños.”

“Start doing something for your ICRP right away! For the optimal experience abroad, I would say get connected as soon as you can with at least one activity in Quito or through a University club is the way to
go. Some suggestions: salsa lessons, tutoring or being tutored by one of the indigenous kids at the University (a relatively new thing, ask around), joining a PE class, etc.”

“If you get any chance, take a class with Vlasti Zak or one with David Romo. They’re both great fun and extremely interesting to talk to.”

FOOD

“We spent a lot of time in the Shwarma restaurants which offered cheap wraps and cheap beer.”

“Ever tried a white pineapple? It’s so good you can even eat the core. In some places on the coast you can get several of these amazing fruits for a dollar!”

“Beware of Tomate de Arbol.”

“Besides the fruit, most dishes seem to include a hearty serving of rice.”

“Keep tabs on where the food you get is coming from since bacteria on the equator is quite different than anything the average American is exposed to.”

“Fried things (pork, plantains, eggs) are all over in Ecuador, especially in the highlands. Shrimp (deep-fried or pan-fried) reminds me of the coast.”

Check out these restaurants: Tapas y Vino (Plaza Foch), Magic Bean (Plaza Foch), Crepes y Waffles (Quicentro), Bigote (Cumbaya), and Shawarma (right behind Quicentro)

GENERAL ADVICE FOR STUDY ABROAD

“Two of the most important things about going to study abroad in Ecuador is that 1) you can’t go in with any expectations and 2) you have to put yourself out there in order to get to know people. Know that you’re going to miss your family and friends, be frustrated with the culture, and will want to go back to good old Kalamazoo at some point. However, just bear in mind that this is your opportunity to know a really fascinating part of the world that’s rich in culture and diversity. Making friends will be hard at first, but usually students in your class are more than willing to chat or show you around the city if you initiate conversation or invite them to go out.” Alison Trump K’09

“The best advice I can give is 1.) Be open to new experiences beyond what you’re normally used to; there is so much to do and experience in Ecuador that it would be a shame to miss it because of timidity or nervousness. 2.) Don’t take yourself too seriously and be able to laugh at yourself; everyone will make a lot of embarrassing mistakes and it is best if you can take it all in stride and have fun with it.” Daniel Hulbert K’09

“Go into [living with a host family] with an open mind, but if you can tell things aren’t going to work out long term, don’t be afraid to switch, early on. But, be open minded all the time.”
PAST PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

OTHER TIPS

Here’s some things we wish we had known before going on study abroad.

Health Stuff

▪ Know yourself and bring medicines you use. Don't bring meds you’ve never used before just because they are on the list of suggested things to bring.

▪ Don't be afraid to go to the doctor/health center at the University. It'll be cheap and it's better to get anything looked at before it could get worse.

▪ Ladies- Bring tampons because those can sometimes hard to find in pharmacies. But all other feminine products are available so no need to overload beforehand.

▪ You all will need to get the Yellow Fever vaccine. At the health center at K (and in general in the U.S.) the vaccine is about $200 or so. At the health center at the Universidad, it is about $20. You need the vaccine and the card for getting into Tiputini, but you will not need it before that. I would suggest getting that yellow card with all your vaccines and bring it and go to the health center shortly after arriving to get the vaccine and have your card filled out. My host mom is a nurse at the clinic and so I feel comfortable telling you all that you should not feel worried or uneasy about getting a vaccine there. The clinic at the university is very nice and accessible.

▪ Bring water bottles!!! Good ones are hard to find there. Don’t forget that you can bring them on the plane... as long as they are empty when going through security!

Family Stuff

▪ Go into it with an open mind, but if you can tell things aren't going to work out long term, don't be afraid to switch, early on. But, be open minded all the time.

▪ If your mom asks you how much you like to eat, tell her more than less. Just to edge on the side of caution for the future.

▪ It can be rude to refuse food, but you don't want to be force-fed giant meals for 6 months either. It probably varies between families, but after a couple of weeks I felt comfortable turning down offers for seconds and telling my host mom what foods I preferred over others. She was cool with it.

Restaurants
Tapas y Vino - Plaza Foch

Magic Bean - Plaza Foch

Shere Punjab on Juan Leon Mera and La Pinta

Crepes y Waffles - Quicentro

Bigote (Cumbaya)

Shawarma - right behind Quicentro, great pregame spot

**Places to Go**

- Cuenca
- Montañita
- Cotopaxi (climb a volcano...)
- Quilotoa
- Baños (so many activities, just look up Baños and you'll see)
- Guayaquil (Iguana park and the malecón (boardwalk))
- Mindo (butterfly garden, orchid garden, zip-lining through the cloud forest, tubing down a river, jumping off a waterfall/nature hike)
- Puerto Lopez (and Isla de la Plata)
- Peru
- Otavalo (Kalamazoo Program trip) (artisan market for all your gift needs)
- Muisne
- Papayacta

**ICRP Stuff**

- Profs are good sources, especially if you don't want to do a service project. My journalism prof got me connected with the student radio station and connected someone else with La Hora, a city newspaper.

**Theft**
Check with your parent's insurance company. My laptop was stolen from my house (no one was home, no big deal) and my parent's insurance ended up covering it because I was technically living there. You could check beforehand to make it less terrible if something like that were to happen.

General

- Community volunteering during the K trips are great and a lot of fun.
- K trips are cool, very diverse and you get to learn a lot.
- Hugo (E&E professor) is the best.

Tiputini (All)

- You are allowed 11 kg on the plane that will be the first part of your trip to Tiputini. Pack as much as you can in that amount. Lots of shirts are great because you will sweat a lot and it is nice to have fresh clothes.
- They will do laundry for you once a week (so 2 laundry days).
- You will have electricity at certain times of the day (11-1 and 6-10?).
- Running water at all times (unless the water tower tank is empty and they have to refill it when the electricity comes back on).
- You will stay in cabins of 4 that are screened in so few bugs should get inside.
- The library has a window air conditioner. We hung out a lot in the library.
- You can swim in the Tiputini river when you wear a life jacket.
- Explore the woods a lot! There is so much to see and it is just beautiful. Soak it all in.
- For anyone that prefers to wear glasses: consider bringing contacts. I found that when we were walking in the jungle, as I sweat my glasses kept fogging up. Contacts would have been nice.
- Sunglasses are good for the boat rides but not necessary during the walks because the canopy keeps you well shaded.
- A tube of sunscreen is a good idea. Put it on for boat rides and swimming. You will not need it while walking (canopy coverage provides good shade).
- Bug spray (non-aerosol) is definitely a good idea. The bugs aren't really that bad, but it also can't hurt to bring your own stash. I wore long pants and a long shirt at all times (my pants
were the ExOfficio BugsAway brand) and I don't think I got bitten once. So you can either wear long things or put on a good coat of bug spray.

- You DO NOT need hiking boots for this trip. You will be wearing rubber boots (like rain boots) during all of your walks because of mud and other stuff. Don't buy new boots for this and don't even bring them unless you really enjoy wearing them while just walking around camp.

- Bring some flip-flops/sandals for hanging around camp.

- The water there is all purified from the water from the river. That means that all water (sink water, shower water, toilet water (ew?)) is safe to drink. But that also means that all the water you use goes back into the river. So they give you this biodegradable soap that you have to use (to decrease your environmental impact). If you are a normal-ish person that does not particularly like to use a body soap type thing for body soap, shampoo and conditioner, I would find some biodegradable stuff (shampoo/conditioner) and bring it with you. I really wish I would have had something to use besides the stuff they gave us.

- You can take the malaria pills that they tell you to take but there is also very little malaria there. They will tell you at orientation that malaria is all but eradicated in Ecuador. I would recommend taking them if you don't have any unusual side effects.

- If you are like me and don't particularly like creepy crawly things, don't worry. I mean, you are in the Amazon jungle, so you are going to see them, but you should be fine. I found that since I was there and was expecting to see things, I was more comfortable with them. If you don't want to see the giant spiders, don't go walking the trails at night. You should be safe in your room, but always check your bed before climbing in... and either put bug spray on or wear a shirt in bed because someone got bitten a lot by a little bug in their bed one night.

- The food here is pretty good considering the location. Breakfast is at 6:30am every day, lunch at 12 and dinner at 7. You will find that your day revolves around this schedule. They have fruit and snacks and coffee sitting out at most times that is free for the taking. The food can get somewhat repetitive, but at least it is there. Also, every night at dinner you get desserts.

- Flashlights/headlamps are a MUST (and extra batteries/rechargeable batteries).

- Hats/buffs are nice to keep things out of your hair... I think buffs are better because the brim of your hat won't block your view.

- WATER BOTTLES!!! Clean them every day to avoid getting stomach sick.

- iPods/cameras/electronics of all kinds should be kept in the library's dry box away from the moisture. Also, backpacks or anything that may have gotten the slightest bit wet on the journey
to the station should be left in the library (it is safe to leave things in there). We had a pretty bad problem when all our backpacks started growing mold... and even a belt buckle sprouted some little things. While interesting, it was also a little annoying. By the end, most things smelled like mold. Maybe bring something to freshen the scent?

- RAIN COAT

- If you have a hiking backpack, you could use that. You have to lug your luggage (haha!) around a lot, including along some stepping-stone type stairs and so backpacks are somewhat easier. But if you don’t already have one, don’t worry about it. Most people just used suitcases.