

Jesse's experience on the 2022 Faculty-led Program Abroad to Ecuador

Published 9/6/2022 by [Martin Fortunato](#)

Jesse is a **Veterinary Technician** student who took part in a Faculty-led Program Abroad (FLPA) in Summer 2022 at **Universidad de Especialidades Espíritu Santo** in Guayaquil, Ecuador.

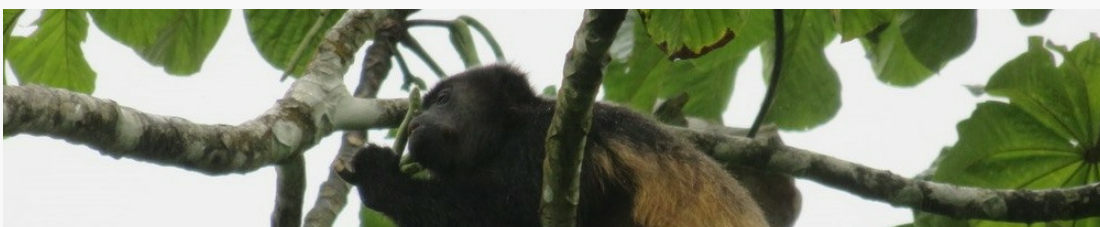
Published: August 5, 2022

I had the very fortunate opportunity to participate in the Faculty-Led Program to Ecuador this past May 2022. In many ways, it exceeded my expectations and has become one of my most memorable and enjoyable trips. Starting this trip, not knowing anyone, was very nerve-wracking, but I left with 18 amazing new friends that I'm sure will be in my life for years to come.

Apart from the other students on the trip, the cultural and environmental experiences we had were unforgettable. Learning from locals about their craft, their food and their music; seeing different species of wildlife in their natural habitat and at sanctuaries; discovering the rain forests of Ecuador and the plant life that thrives there. Every moment was full of excitement, and I am so grateful I was able to take part.

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The itinerary of our trip was packed full of amazing experiences, it is difficult to pick just one favourite moment. I greatly enjoyed the hiking trips and seeing the howler monkeys in their natural habitat. We also went snorkeling and were able to swim with green sea turtles, which was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for many of us and will never be forgotten. Outside of the itinerary, spending my free time with the amazing group of girls was so fun. We shared many meals over laughs and great conversation.





A photo of a howler monkey in its natural habitat.

Ecuador has become one of the most favourite places I have ever visited. The people are welcoming, the weather was perfect and the food was delicious. This trip highlighted some places I want to return to one day and it was overall an amazing time. I tried many new foods for the first time, like the famous dish "Tigrillo", crab, and cocoa plant fruit. I also had a great time shopping and buying souvenirs and handcrafted goods from locals, like jewellery made from palms or alpaca wool blankets.



Colorful buildings in Guayaquil, Ecuador.

If you have the opportunity to take part in a trip abroad for any reason, you should definitely do it. There will be no other time in your life that you will be able to have a similar experience. Going to a new country with a big group of like-minded individuals and enjoying each other's company while you see all these new things is unlike any other trip I have ever been on. I highly recommend participating in an abroad experience and enhancing your Seneca experience at the same time. When I look back at my time at Seneca, this will be one of the things I will be forever grateful I had the chance to do.