

Rehearsing Change: Pachaysana's Fall 2021 Semester Plans

UPDATED: May 31, 2021 (Updates from our April plans are shared in Red, including our updated "Most likely scenario below")

Pachaysana plans on offering a **Fall 2021** semester of [Rehearsing Change](#), which will be carefully designed with our community partners and structured to provide the safest experience for students and local participants. Since our cohorts are small, we will also closely collaborate with our university partners to establish an accepted list of protocols for everyone in the program. That being said, because of the everchanging realities on the ground (in Ecuador and the United States), we reserve the right to make changes to protocols on short notice. Two months prior to the term, in the last week of June, we will send a list of COVID protocols to all sending institutions that have accepted students for the fall semester. At the bottom of this document you will find our "working protocols," which we are developing with host communities and according to recommendations from local and international authorities/experts.

Program Structure: We have outlined three possible plans for the semester. We describe each one with its specific characteristics. Each plan carries the following assumptions:

- Students must arrive fully vaccinated with a vaccination record, indicating that the vaccine received by the student is one that has been authorized for emergency use by the FDA. **The only exception to this requirement is for religious or medical purposes. In such cases, students will be required to sign a release form and assume costs for pre-program quarantining and PCR testing.**
- Students must agree to regular PCR COVID testing. At this time Ecuador only has regular availability of the more invasive nasal swab. We hope that less invasive test will be available by August. Tests are administered to move between communities or in the event that people in our inner or extended circles test positive.
- Students are permitted to transition to remote learning at any moment during the semester and refunds will be issued according to the policy below.
- Pachaysana will likely impose certain restrictions on program participants. These restrictions will be sent with our COVID protocols in late June, two months prior to the program start date. They may include one or more of the following: limited or no independent travel, no travel on public transportation, limited or no overnight excursions, and limited access to cities or places where large amounts of people gather.

Plan A: Community-based semester with a normal calendar (Late August to Early or Mid-December)

This plan is similar to our normal Rehearsing Change semester with added COVID protocols. A usual semester lasts approximately 16 weeks (between 110 to 120 days however, considering certain restrictions and limitations, Pachaysana may reduce the semester to a total of between 89 and 109 days – Early September to Early December.

- Orientation (approximately 1 week) will be carried out in a pod at a local retreat center or lodge outside of Quito. Students will be PCR tested before leaving orientation and entering host communities. During this time, students will determine the focus of their independent studies, which they will work on throughout the semester.
- Module One (approximately 5 to 6 weeks) with two courses* in our first partner community of the semester. Followed by a PCR test.
- A break with structured travel for the international student cohort (approximately 1 week).
- Module Two (approximately 5 to 6 weeks) with two courses* in our second partner community of the semester. Followed by a PCR test.
- A mini-module for processing and finishing pending work (approximately 1 week). PCR tests are offered for those students needing them as entry requirements to their country or state.

* In one module we will study *Theatre for Social Change* and *Design and Evaluation of Sustainable Community Projects* and in the other we will study *Storytelling: Language and Movement* and *Identity and Pacha*.

Plan B: A community-based semester with a reduced calendar (Early-September to Late November)

This plan is carried out similar to our normal Rehearsing Change semesters with two main differences: the implementation of COVID protocols and reduced time with each partner community. Students take only one class with each partner community and we offer the class *Identity and Pacha* only to our international students (referring to students from home institutions in the USA). This class will be taught $1/3$ online, starting before arrival to Ecuador, and $2/3$ in-person (carried out **during our orientation and** via regular weekly sessions throughout the rest of the semester). The in-country portion of the semester will be reduced to a total of between 75 and 89 days.

- Special extended pre-departure orientation. First $1/3$ of the course *Identity and Pacha* online
- Orientation (approximately 1 week) will be carried out in a pod at a local retreat center or lodge outside of Quito. Students will be PCR tested before leaving orientation and entering host communities. During this time, students will determine their independent studies, which they will work on throughout the semester.
- Module One (approximately 3 to 4 weeks) with one full course* in our first partner community of the semester. We will also study the first part of our *Design and Evaluation of Sustainable Community Projects* course. This module is followed by a PCR test.
- A break with structured travel for the international student cohort (approximately 1 week).
- Module Two (approximately 3 to 4 weeks) with one full course* in our second partner community of the semester. We will also study the second part of our *Design and Evaluation of Sustainable Community Projects* course. This module is followed by a PCR test.
- A mini-module for processing and finishing pending work (approximately 1 week). PCR tests are offered for those students needing them as entry requirements to their country or state.

* In one module we will study *Theatre for Social Change* and in the other we will study *Storytelling: Language and Movement*.

Plan C: A pod-based semester with a reduced calendar (Early-September to Late November)

If Pachaysana and our partner communities decide that the current situation does not allow for community-based programming that meets our strict health and safety standards, we will revert to “Pod-style” learning. Following the same calendar as Plan B, instead of living and learning in the partner communities, students will be joined by community counterparts in lodges, farms or retreat centers in the Andes and Amazon for the two indicated modules. All will go through the rigid testing process already described and be required to have a negative result to enter our “pod”. The pod sites will be geographically isolated, thus prohibiting participants from physically contacting people outside of the pod; yet, we will have ground transportation present 24/7 for emergencies. Classes will be carried out in the pod as a cohort and because there will be no coming and going from the pod, we will loosen social distancing requirements. As in Plan B, we will only offer the class *Identity and Pacha* to our international students (referring to students from home institutions in the USA). It will be half online and half in-person. The in-country portion of the semester will be reduced to between 75 and 89 days.

- Special extended pre-departure orientation. First $1/3$ of *Identity and Pacha* is carried out online

- Orientation (approximately 1 week) will be carried out in a pod at a local retreat center or lodge outside of Quito. Students will be PCR tested before community members arrive to the pod site. During this time, students will determine their independent studies, which will be developed throughout the semester.
- Module One (approximately 3 to 4 weeks) with one full course* in our first pod site with partner community counterparts. We will also study the first part of our *Design and Evaluation of Sustainable Community Projects* course. This module is followed by PCR test.
- A break with structured travel for the international student cohort (approximately 1 week).
- Module Two (approximately 3 to 4 weeks) with one full course* in our second pod site in the Amazon region with partner community counterparts. We will also study the second part of our *Design and Evaluation of Sustainable Community Projects* course. This module is followed by PCR test.
- A mini-module for processing and finishing pending work (approximately 1 week). PCR tests are offered for those students needing them as entry requirements to their country or state.

* In one module we will study *Theatre for Social Change* and in the other we will study *Storytelling: Language and Movement*.

MOST LIKELY SCENARIO AS OF MAY 31

Plan B/C combination: A pod-based semester with short community stays on a reduced calendar (Early-September to Late November)

Students and their counterparts will participate in three separate pods (an academic course in each pod), two of which culminate with short community stays in our participating partner communities. Short community stays are great opportunities for partner communities to maintain contact with our students without overburdening them with extensive periods of time in which they must carry out strict Covid protocols. Pachaysana personnel will be present 24/7 during all stages of the semester. We are planning to have one pod in each of three different regions of the country: the Ecuadorian coast, the Highlands, and the Amazon region.

- Special extended pre-departure orientation. First 1/3 of *Identity and Pacha* is carried out online. It then continues with one session per week until the end of the semester.
- Orientation (5 days) will be carried out in a pod at a local retreat center or lodge outside of Quito. Students will be PCR tested before community members arrive to the pod site. During this time, students will continue the *Identity and Pacha* class and determine their *independent studies*, both of which will be developed throughout the semester.
- Module One in an Eco-Lodge on Ecuadorian coast (3 weeks) at our first pod site, joined by partner community counterparts. One course: *Theatre for Social Change*. This module is followed by PCR test.
- Module Two with 2 weeks at an Eco-Lodge in the Ecuadorian Highlands, joined by partner community counterparts, and 1 week at a local partner community. One course: *Design and Evaluation of Sustainable Community Projects*.
- A break with a structured excursion for the international student cohort (1 week). This break is followed by PCR test.
- Module Three with 2 weeks at an Eco-Lodge in the Ecuadorian Amazon, joined by partner community counterparts, and 1 week at a local partner community. One course: *Storytelling: Language and Movement*.
- A mini-module for processing and finishing pending work (3 days). PCR tests are offered for those students needing them as entry requirements to their country or state.

DATES for the Plan B/C combination

Our new tentative dates are:

Online portion (1/3 of our Identity class is done before arrival to Ecuador): **Aug 30**

Arrival to Quito: **Sept 6**

End of In-Country Program: **Nov 22**

All projects and work are due: **Dec 3**

Dates for Optional Pre-Semester Class (Ecuador: Language, Culture and Justice) – for an additional cost of \$1850

This class is 50% online and 50% in-person. Costs include a 3-credit Spanish Immersion course, lodging, meals, cultural activities and one two-day excursion.

Online portion: **Aug 16**

Arrival to Quito: **Aug 26**

End of Pre-Semester Course: **Sept 6**

We are about 90% certain of sticking with these dates regardless of the final structure for the semester.

Prime Factors in Determining our Course of Action

There are three overarching considerations that will determine whether we elect Plan A, B, C, **or the B/C combination**, and that can lead to potential program suspension/cancellation.

1. **State of affairs in Ecuador**, especially in the several provinces and municipal districts where we can carry out programming (according to Plans A, B and C). The state of affairs is determined by:
 - a. What is the current level of alert from the national and municipal authorities? The alert system in Ecuador, carried out at national and municipal levels by the country's Emergency Operations Center, is based on reported numbers of Covid cases and levels of occupation at hospitals.
 - b. What measures/protocols have been enacted by national and local authorities over the last 4 to 8 weeks?
 - c. What level of travel advisory is set for Ecuador as evaluated by the U.S. State Department? Currently Ecuador is evaluated as a Level 3 destination.
 - d. How prevalent are documented cases of additional variants in the provinces and municipal districts where our partner communities and pod-sites are located?
2. Existing science on **Covid transmission by vaccinated individuals**. We will use CDC recommendations.
3. Existing science on the **effectiveness of vaccines against newer variants** of Covid. We will monitor disease control centers in the US and abroad.

Triggers for suspending, canceling or shifting from one plan to another:

- Ecuador's health system is overly taxed as indicated by the Ecuadorian government passing decrees in certain provinces. Decrees are designed to restrict social engagement and may include curfews and limitations on travel.
- Existing science suggests the FDA approved vaccines may have less effectiveness against a given strain/variant and that strain/variant is widely detected in Ecuador.
- Existing science suggests that vaccinated individuals are still likely to transmit Covid.

Note: Pachaysana will finalize our plans toward the end of the third week of June. Because we have several partner communities and pod-sites in different areas of Ecuador, we have multiple scenarios that are available to us. If you would like more information regarding specific scenarios and what factors will lead us to choose a specific course of action, please request a phone/Zoom call with us at info@pachaysana.org.

Costs

TOTAL: \$15,215

Tuition and Fees: \$11,965 - Includes tuition for 12 to 15 credits (transcript from Juniata College), orientation, excursions, community counterpart scholarship, community project fund, COVID-19 special investments (all materials needed for effective sanitization, unexpected quarantine in the case of a positive test, and COVID testing for students and appropriate community members)

Room and Board: \$3,250 - Host family stays (or Pod-stays) including three meals per day and snacks for every day of the program.

Not included: Required COVID PCR test before departure to Ecuador, **if unvaccinated** (at this time, Ecuador requires a PCR test to enter the country), International Airfare, international medical or emergency insurance, tourist visa extension cost (approximately \$130 – **only for Plan A**).

Notes: Pachaysana does not require application fees, security deposits, a School of Record fee, and there are no visa costs for stays under 90 days.

Payment Deadlines and Refund Policy (COVID adaptation)

Payment: We will send invoices 60 days prior to the start of the program. Payment of full tuition/fees and room/board is due 30 days prior to the start of the program. Payment plans are available upon request.

Refunds: We offer refunds according to the following schedule and whether the student is withdrawing from the program or moving to remote learning (RL) and completing all coursework online. A transition to RL is available for any student at any time during the semester. We differentiate a student’s transition to RL based on who makes the decision, whether the student is asked to transition by Pachaysana or the sending school or whether the student voluntarily makes the decision. Since we will continue with a full load of online courses, the transition to RL does not greatly affect tuition/fees.

Tuition-Fees Refund

Schedule	Student transitions to RL (Pachaysana or school decision)	Student transition to RL (student decision)	Student withdraws from program
15 to 30 days before arrival	20%	15%	100%
1 to 14 days before arrival	15%	10%	95%
After arrival, before completion of orientation	10%	5%	75%

Before reaching the 30 th day of the program	5%	0%	50%
The 30 th day of the program and afterward	0%	0%	0%

Room/Board Refund

Schedule	Student transitions to RL (Pachaysana or school decision)	Student transition to RL (student decision)	Student withdraws from program
15 to 30 days before arrival	100%	100%	100%
1 to 14 days before arrival	95%	95%	95%
After arrival, before completion of orientation	Pro-rated + \$150 fee	Pro-rated + \$250 fee	Pro-rated + \$250 fee
Before reaching the 30 th day of the program	Pro-rated + \$250 fee	Pro-rated + \$350 fee	Pro-rated + \$350 fee
The 30 th day of the program and afterward	Pro-rated + \$400 fee	Pro-rated + \$500 fee	Pro-rated + \$500 fee

Note: Pro-rated is not determined by the total cost divided by the amount of days. Rather, since different kinds of stays over the course of the semester have different costs, we send a calculation of what funds remain in the students Room & Board account as of the day after leaving Pachaysana official housing and we subtract the fee based on the calendar. Fees raise slightly over the semester because we invest part of Room & Board into community projects shortly before we move into the community. Since we transition between communities throughout the semester, our fees reflect those investments.

“Working” Program Protocols (Updated: May 31, 2021)

We are currently developing protocols with our partner communities, which will take on different forms if we initiate Plan B or C (or a combination of B and C). This is not a final list of protocols and we anticipate making changes every three or four weeks until final protocols are created. The list represents what we call “working protocols,” which will be sent to all our university partners with accepted students for the Fall 2021 semester for their feedback. We will then adapt the protocols and create “final protocols,” which will be sent two months before the beginning of the program. Our “working protocols” include the following at the present time:

- Signed agreements for all students and local participants which describe the protocols in detail and that requires full compliance.
- Regular COVID testing of students according to the provided calendar. For Plan C (and B/C combination), our pod sites are operated by a small staff that lives at the site, and we will also offer testing for their staff. (Paid for by Pachaysana)
- All learning spaces must be supplied with their own disinfectant supplies and cleaned according to the schedule provided (for example, before and after classes- paid for by Pachaysana) Pod sites operate with less strict disinfecting schedules than community-based learning spaces.

- All host families (and pod sites) are provided with sufficient disinfectant (paid for by Pachaysana) for daily maintenance and according to the signed agreement will need to be disinfected in the designated parts of each home (or living quarters) according to the schedule that is provided.
- Bathrooms must have their own disinfectant present 24-hours a day. (paid for by Pachaysana)
- All students are required to stay in the community (or pod) for the duration of the module unless they have been given authorization from Pachaysana personnel.
- Unless in pod-sites, mask-wearing is mandatory at all class sessions and other official programmatic activities. (Extra masks are provided to all participants by Pachaysana.)
- Unless in pod-sites, reasonable social distancing, approximately 2 meters of physical distance, is required for all participants during all programmatic activity.
- All participants are provided with hand sanitizer or a spray bottle of alcohol. When outside of Pachaysana's normal programmatic activity, they are encouraged to disinfect their hands.
- All participants are encouraged to wash or sanitize their hands before and after all programmatic activity
- All students are provided single occupancy rooms with host families.