

## Rehearsing Change: Pachaysana's Spring 2022 Semester Plans

**Operational Plan: October 15, 2021**

**NOTE:** While this document represents our final operational plan, it is likely that we will make certain changes over the next 3+ months. We will communicate all changes to our accepted students and their home institutions.

This document represents Pachaysana's operational plans for the **Spring 2022** semester of [Rehearsing Change](#), which we are carefully designing with our community partners to provide the safest experience for students and local participants. We began with a structure based on our Fall 2021 pod-based semester and the intention to gradually "scale-up" the community-based components. However, over the last month, the vaccination rates at our partner communities have increased greatly, allowing us to carry out our entire program in the communities. Students will have the option of living with host families or in student/volunteer housing. This document explains the structure, calendar, and protocols for the semester.

### Current situation:

Officially, Ecuador's population is almost 60% fully vaccinated\*. Taking into consideration that almost 25% of the population are children 12 and under, and that children five years and older will be eligible for vaccination starting October 18, we anticipate a vaccination rate of between 70 and 75% of the entire population by the end of January 2022. In our partner communities, our preliminary surveys show higher vaccination rates than country-wide statistics and we expect no less than 75% of community populations to be vaccinated by the end of January. It should also be noted that Ecuador's health system is now operating at a normal capacity and private clinics where student health insurance is accepted report no shortages in resources or staffing.

\*Statistics do not consider the thousands of Ecuadorians who traveled to other countries in mid-2021 for vaccination

**Program Structure: 100% community-based with two housing options on a reduced calendar** (In-person dates: February 4 to April 27/28)

Students and their counterparts will participate in three separate modules (with a site-specific orientation and academic course in each module). They will have the option to live with a host family (Pachaysana's recommendation) or in independent community-based housing. The independent housing is shared by all students who choose this option and community members take turns preparing meals. (Note: community members prepare two meals per day and students will be provided with needed resources to prepare one meal per day.) Each module will include a mini-excursion and there will be one longer excursion (6 days) between Modules 1 and 2. Pachaysana personnel will be present 24/7 during all stages of the semester, including orientation, excursions and the optional pre-semester course. Two modules will be carried out in the Andean community of Pintag and one module will be carried out in the Amazon community of La Mariscal, both of which are longstanding partners with extensive experience hosting international students.

### Program Details:

- Special extended **pre-departure orientation**. This period includes the first 20% of our course *Identity and Pacha*, which is carried out one day per week during the three weeks prior to the official arrival date. (The course continues throughout the semester in partnership with the community of Pintag.)
- **A 4-day Orientation** beginning the day after arrival in an ecovillage approximately one-hour outside of Quito. During this time, students determine the focus of their *independent studies*, if not decided before arrival.
- **PCR test** to enter first Module (paid for by Pachaysana).

- **Module One** in Pintag. This module is one week longer than the others allowing us to carry out the course *Storytelling: Language and Movement* and continue the course *Identity and Pacha*.
- A structured 6-day **excursion** with international students and local counterparts to a lodge in the Amazon Rainforest
- **PCR test** to enter Module 2 (paid for by Pachaysana).
- **Module Two** in La Mariscal where we carry out the course *Theatre for Social Change*. (This course includes a short retreat with community members from La Mariscal and Indigenous communities of the Amazon.)
- **PCR test** for students to enter Module 3 (paid for by Pachaysana).
- **Module Three** in Pintag where we carry out the course *Design and Evaluation of Sustainable Community Projects* and complete the final sessions of *Identity and Pacha*.
- A **mini-module** for students-only set aside for reflection, processing and finishing pending work (3 days). Students are offered PCR tests (paid for by Pachaysana) if required for entry to their country of residence.
- **Post in-country period** to finish written work. All students have approximately 10 days to turn in any pending work. Extensions may be granted upon request.

### Important Notes

- Students must arrive fully vaccinated with a vaccination record indicating their vaccine has been authorized for emergency use by the FDA (e.g. Pfizer, Moderna, or Johnson & Johnson). If the CDC or FDA recommend a booster shot for a student's specific vaccine, we will also recommend it for eligible students, yet it will not be required for participation. The only exception to the vaccination requirement is for religious or medical purposes. In such cases, students will be required to sign a release form and assume costs for a pre-program quarantine and additional regular PCR testing. Additional note: unvaccinated students will only be accepted after extensive consultation with the student's home college/university, which must provide a written declaration acknowledging that the religious or medical exception is acceptable for their institution.
- Students must agree to regular PCR COVID testing according to the structure above. Additional tests may be required if 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.

### TENTATIVE DATES

Online portion of *Identity and Pacha*: **Jan 19, 26 and Feb 2 (3-hour sessions)**

Arrival to Quito: **Feb 4**

Orientation: **Feb 5 to 8**

Module 1: **Feb 9 to Mar 7**

Excursion: **Mar 8 to Mar 14**

Module 2: **Mar 15 to Apr 3**

Module 3: **Apr 4 to Apr 23**

Mini-Module: **Apr 24 to Apr 27**

End of In-Country Program: **Apr 27 at night or Apr 28 in the morning**

All projects and work are due: **May 6**

#### Optional Pre-Semester Class (*Ecuador: Language, Culture and Justice*)

3-credit Spanish Immersion course

25% online and 75% in-person

Additional cost: \$1850 (depending on number of students, we may reduce this cost)

Costs include tuition for the 3-credit course, all lodging, meals, cultural activities, transportation, COVID-protocols and one two-day excursion.

Online portion: **Jan 17 to Jan 20**

Arrival to Quito: **Jan 22**

Mini Orientation: **Jan 23**

In-Country Instruction: **Jan 24 to Feb 4**

End of Pre-Semester Course: **Feb 4**

**Important Note for Pre-Semester students:** Because those who participate in this course will pass the 90-day limit for visitors, students will be required to extend their free tourist visas for a cost of \$130.

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### **Prime Factors that have determined our course of action**

There are three overarching considerations that led us to choosing our semester's structure and that could lead to potential suspension/cancelation.

1. **State of affairs in Ecuador**, especially in the several provinces and municipal districts where we can carry out programming. The situation is determined by:
  - a. What is the current level of alert from the national and municipal authorities? The alert system in Ecuador is carried out at national and municipal levels by Ecuador's Emergency Operations Center. It is based on reported numbers of Covid cases and occupancy levels at public hospitals. *Note: as of October 2021, public hospitals report regular levels of available beds in hospitalization and ICU's. Private clinics/hospitals where student insurance is accepted report no shortages in resources.*
  - b. What measures/protocols have been enacted by national and local authorities?
  - c. What level of travel advisory is set for Ecuador as evaluated by the U.S. State Department? *Note: 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 use CDC recommendations.
3. Existing science on the **effectiveness of vaccines against newer variants** of Covid. We will monitor disease control centers in the U.S. and abroad.

Triggers for suspending or canceling:

- If Ecuador's health system becomes over-taxed as indicated by the Ecuadorian government passing "red-light" decrees in the provinces or municipal districts where our program is located, then we will immediately survey the private health system and evaluate occupancy levels. If statistics demonstrate that private clinics and hospitals, where student insurance is accepted, are operating at normal capacity, will not suspend or cancel. Rather, we will immediately contact students and partner schools and allow them to make their own decisions.  
(Note: In Ecuador, there are three health systems including 2 separate public systems and a robust private health system. Decrees are designed to restrict social engagement and may include curfews and limitations on travel.)
- If existing science suggests the FDA approved vaccines have significantly less effectiveness against a given strain/variant that is widely detected in Ecuador.
- If existing science suggests that vaccinated individuals are likely to transmit a Covid strain that is present in Ecuador.

## Costs

**TOTAL: \$15,215**

**Tuition and Fees: \$11,965** - Includes tuition for 12 to 18 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 student housing-stays) including three meals per day for every day of the program (and snacks during official program activities).

Not included: Required COVID PCR test before departure to Ecuador if mandated by the Ecuadorian government (at this time, Ecuador requires a record of being fully vaccinated OR a PCR test to enter the country), International Airfare, international medical or emergency insurance, tourist visa extension cost (approximately \$130) for those who take the pre-semester course or if a student decides to stay in country after our in-country portion of the semester (students can stay in Ecuador for up to 90 days at no cost).

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

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## 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 transitioning 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 <sup>th</sup> day of the program	5%	0%	50%
The 30 <sup>th</sup> 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 <sup>th</sup> day of the program	Pro-rated + \$250 fee	Pro-rated + \$350 fee	Pro-rated + \$350 fee
The 30 <sup>th</sup> 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 incur different costs, we send a calculation of what funds remain in the students Room & Board account from the day after leaving Pachaysana's official housing. We then subtract the stated fee according to the calendar provided. Fees rise slightly over the semester because we invest part of Room & Board into community projects shortly before we move into the community or pod. Since we transition between communities throughout the semester, our fees reflect those investments.

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## **Program Protocols (Updated: October 15, 2021)**

- All program participants must sign an agreement describing the protocols and agree to full compliance.
- All program participants agree to regular COVID testing according to our calendar (paid for by Pachaysana).
- If determined necessary by Pachaysana, all students and local participants agree to take their temperature daily and report it to Pachaysana personnel (individual thermometers provided to each program participant).
- All learning and living spaces are supplied with disinfectant and sanitization supplies (paid for by Pachaysana) and all participants agree to take part in a regular cleaning schedule.
- All students and local participants have the right to request that additional protocols be put in place for our cohort. Suggestions are made anonymously, and additions are approved democratically by the participants.
- Bathrooms must have their own disinfectant present 24-hours a day (paid for by Pachaysana)
- All students are required to stay in the community for the duration of the module unless they have been given direct authorization from Pachaysana. All independent travel is restricted until further notice.
- Unless in an isolated site or unless the community reaches Pachaysana's immunity threshold (currently set at an 75% vaccination rate\* for a partner community), mask-wearing and social distancing of 1.5 to 2 meters will be mandatory during official programmatic activities. (Extra masks are provided by Pachaysana.)
- 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.

\* Because we work with small communities of approximately 200 to 250 habitants, we can assess vaccination rates by surveying the families that participate in our programming (whose members account for about 15% to 20% of a community's population) and cross-reference the data with a survey of other randomly selected community members that are not currently participating in the program. The two figures are averaged to estimate a vaccination rate.