

# LEADING THE WAY

2019–20  
LEAD IMPACT  
REPORT



---

# MESSAGE FROM SENIOR DIRECTOR AYANNA MCCONNELL

When you chose to give to the LEAD Scholars program, you became a part of something unbreakable; you joined fellow donors and brilliant students, and together you built a family. As a LEAD family, we can face any challenge.

The COVID-19 pandemic took our world by storm, and it was a challenge nobody saw coming. **We know you are by our side as we weather this storm—because of you, the LEAD community is rising up and standing stronger than ever.**

**Your gift gives these scholars a support system—a home, a place of belonging, and a family of like-minded people who share the same values in life and education.** You invested in the futures of these remarkable students. They will do amazing things and change the world, and this is because of you.

You make an impact on these scholars every single day. You're with them for all the big moments; through every phase of growth and change, you support their dreams and celebrate their successes. **Even when these scholars leave campus to begin a new chapter of life, you'll be with them—because wherever they go, you helped get them there.**

Despite what's going on around us now, a lot of amazing things happened throughout the 2019-20 academic year. I invite you to take a minute to look back at these times and triumphs; now more than ever, it's important to celebrate the good in life.

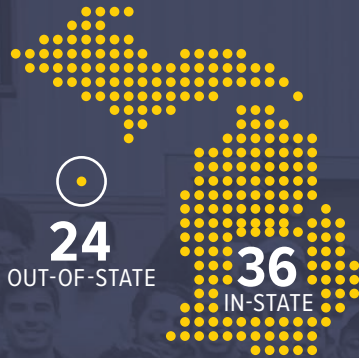
Stay connected, stay healthy, and Go Blue!



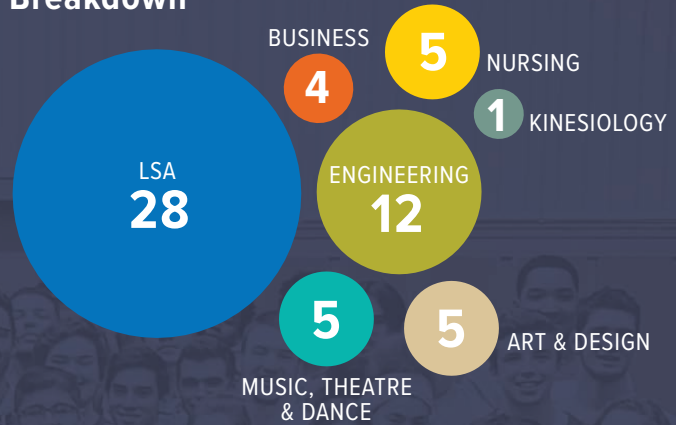
Ayanna McConnell  
Senior Director, University/Student Engagement  
and LEAD Scholars Program



### Geographical Makeup



### School/College Breakdown

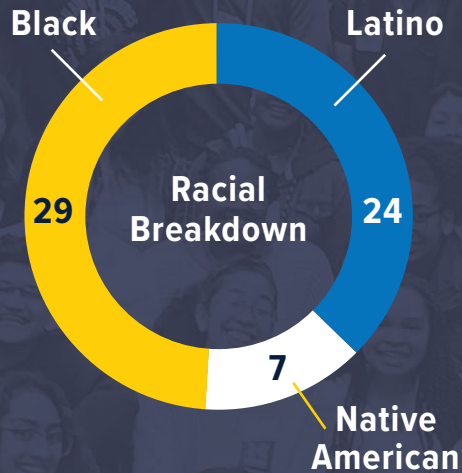


29

Average  
ACT Score



Average GPA



### Gender Breakdown

29  
MEN

31  
WOMEN

## 2019–20 CLASS SNAPSHOT

# THIS COMMUNITY BEGINS WITH YOU

**The minute LEAD Scholars step foot on campus, they have a built-in support system; these students now have a common ground where diversity, inclusivity, and growth are priorities. We have you to thank for that.**

You've created a community that welcomes students of different races and celebrates their individuality, no matter their religion, socioeconomic background, and individual experiences. It's the resources and programming that you support that help these diverse students navigate their college experience from their very first day as Wolverines. The mentoring program connects incoming freshmen with upperclassmen, and various events are planned throughout the year to engage the scholars and give them outlets for their passions and goals. With each year, they build relationships, grow personally and professionally, and seize incredible opportunities. From study sessions to Camp Michigania retreats and open mic nights—your gift supports the community and events that strengthen the LEAD bond and bring these students together.

“

**I love how the events help us connect and network with older students, so we can receive advice from people who have been in our shoes. I loved being a mentee in the mentor program because I received so much helpful insight on things, from scheduling classes to getting more sleep. Even just stopping by the office on Welcome Wednesdays and hearing a word of encouragement from the LEAD program staff really goes a long way during those challenging days. Being a part of this program has definitely made a positive major impact on my time here at the University of Michigan.”**

**— MARIAH STEVENS, 2021**

“

Becoming a LEAD Scholar gave me the assurance that I was going to be part of a community within such a large university — not merely any community, but one that encourages and embraces my background and culture.”

— IGNACIO BARRERAS, 2023

“

I’ve learned the LEAD program is so much more than financial support. I came to Michigan without knowing anyone, but through the program I have met so many new people that are potential lifelong friends.”

— AYANA BOYD, 2023





“

**BECAUSE OF LEAD, I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT HOW I'M GOING TO STAY AT MICHIGAN. INSTEAD, I CAN FOCUS ON MY STUDIES, MY FUTURE, AND ENJOYING MY COLLEGE EXPERIENCE; I CAN FOCUS ON THE LEGACY THAT I WILL LEAVE HERE.”**

# ANTHONY WOMACK

**The moment he became a LEAD Scholar, Anthony Womack also became a first-generation college student. Now walking campus as a proud Wolverine, he wants you to know how much LEAD has changed his life.**

I can only start by stating how thankful I am to have the honor of being a LEAD Scholar; without this wonderful opportunity, I most likely would not be a student at the University of Michigan.

Right before my high school graduation, my father became very ill and we lost him. This devastated my family and completely threw us off track financially — a situation that, without the financial assistance I received from LEAD, could have derailed my entire future at Michigan. As a potential first-generation college student who worked so hard in high school just for a chance to go to the school of my choice, I was concerned about money and whether or not I could attend because of it.

These fears were alleviated when I received the news I would be a LEAD Scholar. **It was one of the most joyful days of my life.** Because of LEAD, I don't have to worry about how I'm going to stay at Michigan. Instead, I can focus on my studies, my future, and enjoying my college experience; I can focus on the legacy that I will leave here.

When I got to campus, LEAD was one of the first groups to help me find a sense of belonging — I've attended fun, wholesome events and have made lifelong friends. I also was granted assistance from the LEAD Emergency Fund so that I could take care of unexpected housing expenses.

Overall, LEAD has impacted my life in ways that I never imagined, and I am beyond thankful. **I will always remember my time in college and know that I can attribute some of my lasting friendships, successes, and overall joy in life to the fact that I was, and always will be, a LEAD Scholar.** Thank you so much for your support.

---

**MAJOR:** MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

**EXPECTED GRADUATION YEAR:** 2022

**HOMETOWN:** DETROIT, MI

**EXTRACURRICULARS:** NSBE (NATIONAL SOCIETY OF BLACK ENGINEERS) COMMUNITY SERVICE COMMITTEE EVENT COORDINATOR, MOSAIC (STOCKWELL HALL MULTICULTURAL COUNCIL) SECRETARY, M-STEM ACADEMIES M-ENGIN 2018 COHORT MEMBER

# SUPPORT BEYOND SCHOLARSHIPS

Because of you, LEAD Scholars like Anthony can find solace in having a safety net to catch them when they're facing emergency expenses or unforeseen circumstances.

**For many of these students, there's nothing scarier than the thought of financial hardships derailing their education — this makes your support of the LEAD Scholars Emergency Fund so critical.** Whether it is assistance for safe housing on campus, support for unexpected costs related to a study abroad experience, or a ticket back home for a family emergency, the fund provides extra financial support to alleviate pressures that deter these students from reaching their full potential in life and their education.



## **IHUNANYA MURUAKO, 2021**

IHUNANYA WAS ABLE TO MAKE AN EMERGENCY TRIP BACK HOME TO NIGERIA AFTER THE DEATH OF HER GRANDMOTHER.

---

"It meant the world to me to be able to lay one of the great matriarchs in my life to rest. The way donors and the entire LEAD community support us in all aspects of our lives makes this program so much more than any other scholarship program; it makes it a family. I am forever grateful."

# THESE STUDENTS WANT TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR INCREDIBLE GENEROSITY AND FOR HAVING SUCH A PROFOUND IMPACT ON THEIR LIVES.



## **ALEIJA RODRIGUEZ, 2023**

YOUR GIFTS OFFSET COSTS FOR A TRAVEL VISA FOR ALEIJA TO STUDY ABROAD IN SOUTH AMERICA.

---

“Having the financial support of LEAD for both academic and extracurricular opportunities is incredibly meaningful. From the bottom of my heart, to the LEAD donors, thank you for everything you do for the community. The work and generosity of everyone associated with LEAD undeniably changed my life for the better.”



## **MIKAYLA MOON, 2022**

MIKAYLA SECURED HER POSITION IN THE 2022 COHORT OF THE MANAGEMENT LEADERSHIP FOR TOMORROW'S CAREER PREP PROGRAM.

---

“This program will jumpstart my career and I am so thankful to be able to be a part of it. Without this award, I would not have access to this amazing opportunity. Support from LEAD donors shows they want to ensure I have all the tools I need to be successful. It's so comforting knowing the entire community will always be there if I need anything.”

“

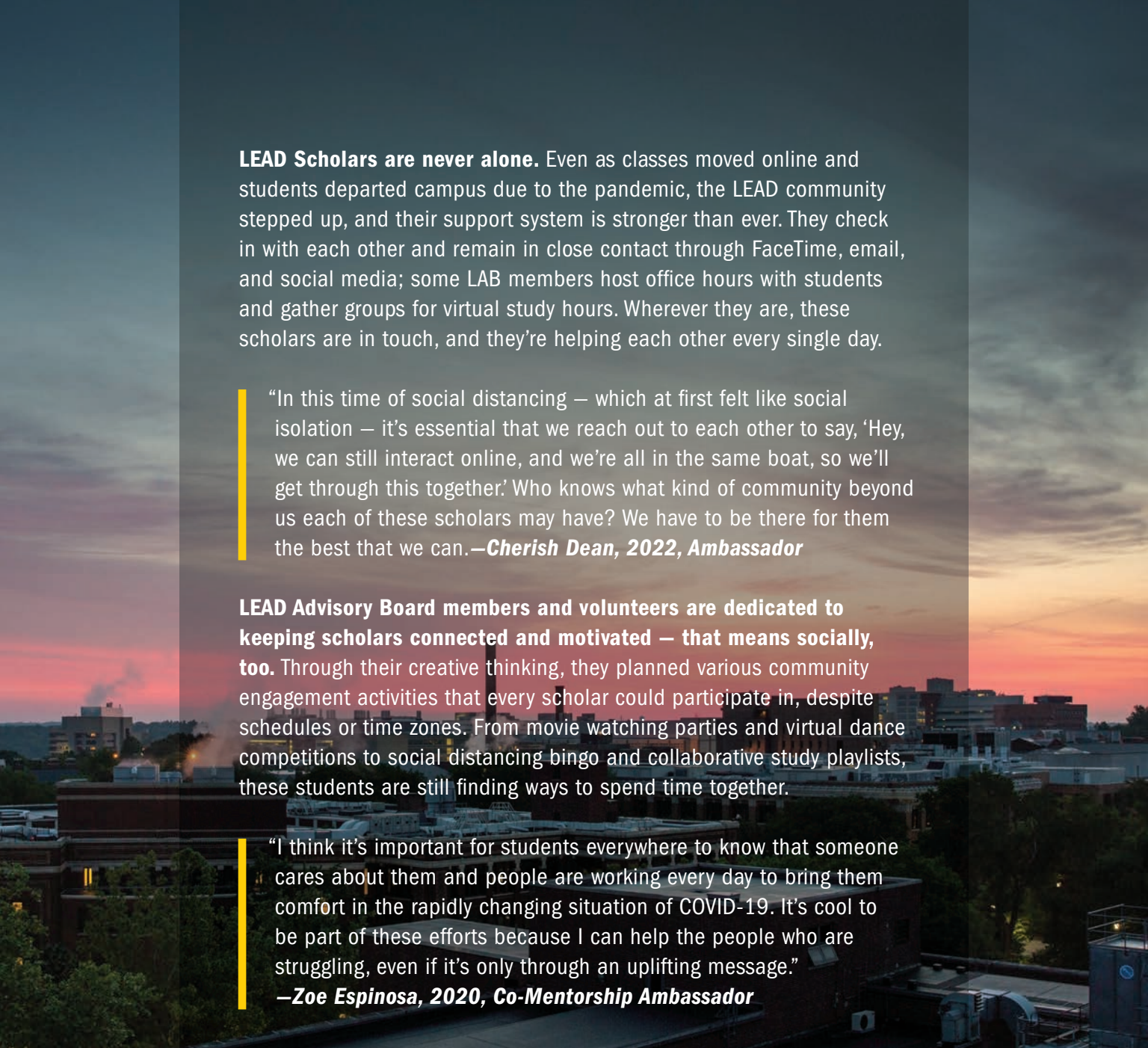
**FOR A LOT OF PEOPLE, LEAD IS A HUGE SOURCE OF EMOTIONAL SUPPORT, NOT JUST FINANCIAL. DESPITE THE FACT THAT WE'RE NOT ALL ON CAMPUS ANYMORE, IT'S IMPORTANT WE ALL STAY CONNECTED AS A COMMUNITY AND CONTINUE TO UPLIFT EACH OTHER ACADEMICALLY, EMOTIONALLY, AND SPIRITUALLY.”**

—CLARA NUNEZ-REGUEIRO, 2023,  
EVENTS COMMITTEE MEMBER

Whether they are facing a personal emergency or a global crisis, the LEAD Scholars have an incredible support system, thanks to you. You've helped build a community of leaders who are rising up and taking action; the LEAD Advisory Board (LAB) is a group of students committed to making sure every scholar feels supported during the COVID-19 pandemic. **Together, they've been working tirelessly with the LEAD team to sustain engagement and unity.**

# LEADERS THROUGH THE UNEXPECTED





**LEAD Scholars are never alone.** Even as classes moved online and students departed campus due to the pandemic, the LEAD community stepped up, and their support system is stronger than ever. They check in with each other and remain in close contact through FaceTime, email, and social media; some LAB members host office hours with students and gather groups for virtual study hours. Wherever they are, these scholars are in touch, and they're helping each other every single day.

“In this time of social distancing — which at first felt like social isolation — it’s essential that we reach out to each other to say, ‘Hey, we can still interact online, and we’re all in the same boat, so we’ll get through this together.’ Who knows what kind of community beyond us each of these scholars may have? We have to be there for them the best that we can.—***Cherish Dean, 2022, Ambassador***”

**LEAD Advisory Board members and volunteers are dedicated to keeping scholars connected and motivated — that means socially, too.** Through their creative thinking, they planned various community engagement activities that every scholar could participate in, despite schedules or time zones. From movie watching parties and virtual dance competitions to social distancing bingo and collaborative study playlists, these students are still finding ways to spend time together.

“I think it’s important for students everywhere to know that someone cares about them and people are working every day to bring them comfort in the rapidly changing situation of COVID-19. It’s cool to be part of these efforts because I can help the people who are struggling, even if it’s only through an uplifting message.”  
—***Zoe Espinosa, 2020, Co-Mentorship Ambassador***”



“

THE LEAD SCHOLARS PROGRAM ENCOURAGES ALL STUDENTS TO UNAPOLOGETICALLY PURSUE THEIR CAREERS AND PASSIONS AND ACHIEVE SUCCESS; THEY'VE FOSTERED THAT KIND OF ENVIRONMENT, AND, BECAUSE OF THAT, I FEEL NOTHING BUT EMPOWERED TO RELENTLESSLY PURSUE MY GOALS.

# CAMILLA CANTU

**For Camilla, receiving a LEAD Scholarship granted her the freedom to focus on her academics and enjoy her entire college experience without financial anxiety — something she wouldn't have without you.**

After being accepted into the University of Michigan, my first thoughts were: 'I can't believe I got in,' and 'how am I going to afford this?' My financial aid package was just short of what I needed to attend the University on a full ride. **When I was awarded the LEAD Scholarship, I was granted the financial security to pursue an education at Michigan—my dream school since I was a kid.**

It was important to me to be financially stable in college because I knew that the less I had to worry about my financial situation, the more time that I would have to focus on school and my college experience instead of work. Support from

the LEAD Emergency Fund also allowed me to study abroad in Israel and Palestine, which gave me the opportunity to explore new cultures and learn about the Israel-Palestinian conflict in an immersed setting. LEAD didn't just support my trip; they made it possible.

This year, I had the privilege of taking a step back from my job as a server to focus completely on my academics and my extracurricular activities. My LEAD Scholarship gave me this freedom to make this choice for myself. I've never felt more balanced, and I've developed a schedule to better care for my mental health, which allows me to be more involved and attend more LEAD events.

The LEAD Scholars program encourages all students to unapologetically pursue their careers and passions and achieve success; they've fostered that kind of environment, and, because of that, **I feel nothing but empowered to relentlessly pursue my goals. You have opened the door of opportunity for me, and I cannot thank you enough for it.**

---

**MAJOR:** BIOPSYCHOLOGY, COGNITION, NEUROSCIENCE

**MINOR:** ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND MUSIC

**EXPECTED GRADUATION YEAR:** 2021

**HOMETOWN:** DETROIT, MI

**EXTRACURRICULARS:** MARIACHI FEMENIL DETROIT DIRECTOR, THE FIRST AND ONLY WOMEN-BASED ENSEMBLE IN THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

# BUILDING FUTURES

Your gift proves that you believe in these students not only for who they are today, but also for who they will become as alumni. For these scholars, the professional programs and events supported by your generosity are turning into mentorships with Michigan alumni, internships across the globe, and hard-earned dream job opportunities.

## STEPPING STONES TO SUCCESS

- Resume and interview skills workshops with Google
- Networking dinners with Intel
- University Career Center events
- Dinner with 5 Wolverines
- Trotter Distinguished Leadership Series with Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, '98, MPH'08
- LEAD Learnings: Applying to U-M Secondary Admission Schools and Graduate School

## WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

**Your generous gifts support the future of female leadership.**

The Women in LEADership event was created to support women professionally by giving them a chance to gain guidance and advice from other women in their fields. Donors, board members, and scholars gather at a formal luncheon where they hear from a panel of alumnae sharing their personal journeys. Because of your support, this is one of the most anticipated and celebrated events in the LEAD community.

“

**THE LEAD COMMUNITY IS A DIRECT SOURCE OF ENGAGING AND INSIGHTFUL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES. I FIRMLY BELIEVE MY CONNECTION TO LEAD WILL HELP ME GROW AS I ADVANCE THROUGH UNDERGRAD, MOVE TO LAW SCHOOL, AND LAUNCH MY CAREER. I GET TO REAP THE BENEFITS OF YOUR SUPPORT EACH DAY, AND I COULD NOT BE MORE THANKFUL.”**

**THOMAS VANCE, 2021**





“

**EVERY SINGLE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EVENT THAT I HAVE ATTENDED THROUGH LEAD HAS PREPARED ME FOR AN INTERNSHIP AND MY FUTURE. I AM EXTREMELY GRATEFUL FOR THIS!**

**DOMINIQUE ROITMAN, 2020**

## **MEN OF COLOR IN LEADERSHIP**

**You're also supporting men of color on their professional journeys.**

The lowest college retention rate is among black males, but because of your dedication to honoring diversity, the LEAD community developed the Men of Color in LEADership event to provide professional opportunities and resources to keep them on track for success. Your support gives these male scholars an opportunity to come together in a space where they can talk about their professional experiences and endeavors as men of color.



A man with dark hair, smiling broadly, wearing a dark grey suit jacket, a dark patterned shirt, and a dark patterned tie. He is sitting with his hands clasped in his lap. The background is a blurred office or lobby with other people and large windows.

“

**THANK YOU FOR INVESTING  
IN THIS COMMUNITY —  
EVERYTHING I’VE LEARNED  
AND EXPERIENCED WILL COME  
WITH ME FOR THE REST OF  
MY LIFE, AND YOU WILL BE A  
HUGE PART OF IT.**

# MAXIMILLIAN GARCIA III

**In his final year as a LEAD Scholar and University of Michigan student, Maximillian reflects on how the LEAD community supported him throughout his entire college experience, especially when his post-graduation plans took an unexpected turn. Because of you, his future will always be bright.**

When I walk across campus, I can stop at the Diag and take a deep breath knowing that I go to the best university in the country; it's about learning, it's about honor, but most importantly it's about my dreams. **I have been given the opportunity to chase my dreams, as ever changing as they are, because you have placed your faith in me.**

The principles LEAD instills in all scholars from day one are what guided me through my entire college experience; being a LEAD Scholar has changed me and consistently adds value to who I am as a person. I became part of a supportive

community that allowed me to exert who I am in a meaningful way—and I was accepted for it.

**The LEAD program staff always pushed me to seize opportunities and grow; now more than ever, they've been supportive of my career journey.** When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the program staff immediately reached out and asked how they could help with the abrupt changes to my plans. I won't get to walk the stage for graduation, my job offers and opportunities are currently halted, and there's so much unknown—my life was uprooted, but LEAD has been there every step of the way.

At the end of the day, I want you to know that I am a Wolverine because of you. Even though I'm leaving campus, LEAD is still a threshold for me; I know the lifelong support system will be a consistent factor in my success. **Thank you for investing in this community—everything I've learned and experienced will come with me for the rest of my life, and you will be a huge part of it. One day I want to give back and support students the same way you do.**

---

**MAJOR:** BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

**MINOR:** PERFORMANCE ARTS MANAGEMENT; SPECIALTY IN PIANO

**GRADUATION YEAR:** 2020

**HOMETOWN:** RANCHO CUCAMONGA, CA

**EXTRACURRICULARS:** SABER FENCING TOURNAMENT MEDALIST, STUDY ABROAD ITALY PARTICIPANT, CARSON SCHOLAR, WALT DISNEY COMPANY INTERN, RECIPIENT OF THE FRANK S. MORAN DISTINGUISHED LEADERSHIP AWARD



“

**KNOW THAT YOU  
HAVE MADE AN  
IMPACT ON MANY,  
BUT YOU ARE ONLY  
HEARING THE  
STORIES OF A FEW.”**

MAXIMILLIAN GARCIA III, 2020

**YOUR GIFTS HAVE BUILT THIS COMMUNITY.  
VISIT [ALUMNI.UMICH.EDU/LEADTHANKS](https://alumni.umich.edu/leadthanks) OR  
SCAN THE QR CODE TO SEE THE FACES OF  
MORE SCHOLARS—THEY WANT TO THANK YOU.**



# THANK YOU

FOR SUPPORTING THE LEAD SCHOLARS PROGRAM

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT LEAD, PLEASE VISIT  
[ALUMNI.UMICH.EDU/LEAD](https://alumni.umich.edu/lead)



**LEAD SCHOLARS**

200 FLETCHER STREET  
ANN ARBOR, MI 48109