

# A FUTURE REIMAGINED

BY THE POWER OF YOUR GIVING

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# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO



I wholeheartedly believe that 2020 has been a true testament to the qualities that make the University of Michigan one of the greatest institutions in the world. As I relish this overwhelming sense of pride, I remember this: true greatness begins with a vision and ends with a legacy, and you and your generosity are intrinsically woven into both.

**Thank you for coming together, not only for Michigan, but for all of humankind. Your investment is transforming the present to enrich our future, even in the face of adversity.**

This year, your deep-rooted support and generous giving united Wolverines across the globe in ways like never before. With every gift, you help someone become a first-generation college student, change a career path, grow a Michigan network, overcome financial barriers to afford an education, find safe communities where diversity is celebrated—these moments, resources, and opportunities are possible because of you.

**As I reflect on all of this, I also feel an overwhelming sense of gratitude—for this legacy, this University, our students and alumni, the impact they make on this world, and for you and your immeasurable dedication to the Alumni Association and its vision.**

Now, I invite you to read how your fellow Wolverines have been leading with greatness, learning with empathy and curiosity, and acting as inspirational change agents for a brighter future, and a safer and healthier world—all because of your gifts. Thank you.

Forever Go Blue,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Grafton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "S" and "G".

Steve Grafton

President and CEO, Alumni Association of the University of Michigan

# LEAD SCHOLARS

Your support of the LEAD Scholars program made an even deeper impact on underrepresented minority students in 2020. Because of the unbreakable community and support system you've helped build, the gifts you've made, and the time you've given, these students' opportunities and success continue to flourish no matter what.

**This is how your gifts allow LEAD Scholars to remain united and focused on a bright future—together as leaders and individually as dreamers.**

Your gifts also help contribute to a University community that is more representative of the world in which we live.

“

**I've been lifted up by women all throughout my life. It's wonderful for us to walk through doors of opportunity, and it's also our responsibility to hold the door open for the next person.”**

Christina Cartwright, '17, LEAD Alumna,  
Federal Healthcare Consultant in Washington, D.C.,  
Founder of Lifestyle Paragon, and  
2020 Women in LEADership Speaker



# Fostering a Virtual LEAD Community

Your gifts help keep LEAD Scholars connected and engaged when they need it most—on campus and across the country. Your generosity has allowed us to enhance and foster an even more supportive, inclusive, and engaging community for LEAD Scholars navigating their Michigan journey, even if that journey is virtual.

## Women in LEADership

Among an exciting collection of virtual events planned specifically for LEAD Scholars was the fifth annual Women in LEADership luncheon, where scholars and donors gathered to network and hear from a panel of successful alumnae speaking about the power of female leadership in today's world.

“

**LEAD has been one of the most impactful programs during my four years at U-M—from hosting seminars on various types of topics and allowing me to work at Welcome Wednesdays, to providing me with professional help and connecting me with a group of individuals to rely on. Even through COVID-19, LEAD has been continuously supportive through various webinars during the summer by connecting us to different resources to help us through the pandemic.”**

Robin Ryce, '21

**The LEAD Scholars program partnered with the Trotter Multicultural Center to host a four-part comprehensive wellness series to help underrepresented students make connections with campus resources and staff of color:**

**1**

**HOW TO FLOURISH:  
FINANCIAL WELLNESS**

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**2**

**HOW TO FLOURISH:  
ACADEMIC WELLNESS**

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**3**

**HOW TO FLOURISH:  
EMOTIONAL &  
MENTAL WELLNESS**

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**4**

**HOW TO FLOURISH:  
PHYSICAL WELLNESS**





# MAYA LYGHT

**As Maya Lyght approaches her 2021 graduation and the next phase of her journey to becoming attorney general, she's reflecting on her entire LEAD experience—an experience you made possible.**

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“Freshman year, LEAD introduced me to Valerie Jarrett; sophomore year, they celebrated me when I interviewed with Michelle Obama; junior year, they funded my summer study abroad and were supportive when everything was uprooted because of COVID-19; senior year, I know I can count on them to be there in some miraculous way once again.”

**The financial support, the community, the opportunities—these all mean Maya can focus on thriving academically and personally. This is because of you.**

“What’s so powerful about the LEAD scholarship is that it’s not just financial aid,” she expresses. “Because you’ve invested in this community, you’ve invested in the Michigan experience that pushes me to be my best self.”

The LEAD Scholars program gave Maya the encouragement she needed to attend networking and social events, make connections, learn professional skills, and bond

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**“You invested in  
someone like me—  
you’ve given me the  
courage to leave  
this university and  
do some things that  
are going to change  
this world.”**

over the greater good of diversity. Joining the LEAD Advisory Board gave her the confidence to join and become president of other student organizations, such as the National Council of Negro Women.

As she finishes her last year at U-M, she says she’s grown into the person she needed to be and that she’s gained a family that supports her every step of the way.

**“Everyone in this community supports you in all of your other life endeavors,” she says. “Beyond the things that we do related to LEAD, there are still things that we can do to support each other in other aspects of our lives—even virtually.”**

Maya says the constant support that surrounds scholars is what is so amazing about the LEAD community, especially now.

**“We’re not around our families that much and sometimes you can’t go home, so having people on campus that act as a secondary family is really important for your mental health and how you feel being here.”**

**In the face of tough times, this family unit is more meaningful than ever—so is the financial support.**

Your generosity allowed Maya to attend U-M and chase her dreams without limit. But when COVID-19 hit, she thought about all the issues that could arise, specifically the possibility of losing her on-campus job and the stress of financial strain. Because of your support and the LEAD community, she quickly learned she had no reason to worry.

**“A lot of student organizations didn’t reach out or do things in the same capacity as LEAD,” she says. “Through the LEAD Emergency Fund I was able to secure funding to pay for my flight home, and the program staff had office hours over the summer so we could call any time for support. It goes back to the whole family thing—everyone actually cares about us and our well-being.”**

**As Maya finishes her fourth year and explores law schools, she is thankful beyond measure for every aspect of the LEAD Scholars program.**

“I think about how different my college experience would have been if I wasn’t a LEAD Scholar, and I don’t think it would’ve been the experience I want to leave here with,” she reflects. “I can’t even imagine what it would’ve been like if I was constantly worrying about how I would pay my tuition or if I hadn’t had these opportunities.”

**Maya is proof of the all-encompassing impact your gifts have on LEAD Scholars’ lives—personally, professionally, academically, and financially.** The soon-to-be alum says donating to LEAD is probably the most impactful action you can take for scholars coming from all different walks of life because it’s an investment in their future.

**“You invested in someone like me—you’ve given me the courage to leave this university and do some things that are going to change this world,” she says. “I can’t thank you enough, and I hope I can help change the world one day.”**

# LEAD EMERGENCY FUND

Now more than ever, some LEAD Scholars fear situations that could leave them without sufficient funds for their education and life necessities.

**Whether they're on campus or across the country, thanks to you, these students have a safety net: the LEAD Scholars Emergency Fund.**

Your gifts, whether they support school essentials or housing and food, remind these scholars of their ever-present support system—even in a pandemic.

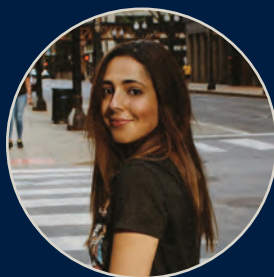
**Because of you, these LEAD Scholars can focus on continuing their Michigan education and getting the most out of their experience without carrying the stress and fear of unexpected or emergency expenses.**



**BRIANNA BRYANT, '23**

Brianna Bryant's family was hit especially hard by COVID-19—her parents became unemployed and couldn't afford groceries, but your gifts ensured they had food and support during their challenging time.

**"This virus has affected my family in so many ways that your help has lifted our spirits. I am so grateful that I will not have to worry about food for me and my family throughout the next couple months—I can't thank you enough."**



**MARIANA ESCOBAR RUIZ, '21**

When Mariana Escobar Ruiz lost her internship due to COVID-19, she suddenly found herself unable to pay rent—until she received assistance from the emergency fund that you support.

**"I feel like the LEAD Scholars program is a resource I can rely on and turn to in times of trouble; knowing this, and acknowledging this access to unwavering support, further makes me feel as though I belong and have a community. Thank you for your immense generosity. It truly does mean the world."**



**NICHOLOS DANIEL, '23**

For Nicholas Daniel, the stay-at-home order meant reduced hours at work, less pay, and not nearly enough money left for day-to-day meals. Your gifts allowed him to keep his fridge and pantry stocked, and his attention focused on his academics and U-M experience.

**"It meant a lot knowing that the program I am part of was able to help me through this process. Your gifts really keep the community standing tall through these tough times. Thank you."**



# Hail! from Home Virtual 5K

Just like your gifts, every mile made a difference.

Throughout October, Wolverines across the globe laced up their sneakers and hit the pavement for the Hail! From Home Virtual 5K. A portion of every registration fee went directly toward the LEAD Scholars Emergency Fund.



▲ Doreen Wegmueller (left) and Jeanne McCarthy (right)



▲ Brad Pfeil, '95

**944**  
Wolverines from  
14 countries  
ran or walked  
their favorite  
5K courses and  
raised more than  
**\$19,000**  
for the  
LEAD Scholars  
Emergency Fund.

# GIVE LIKE A VICTOR

Your gifts to the Give Like a Victor Fund help current and future alumni leverage the power of the Michigan network—one that's never been stronger than it is today. The versatile opportunities, platforms of support, and close-knit communities created with your gifts have helped thousands of alumni and students navigate what has become our new normal.

As the world is rapidly changing around us, your generosity, combined with the generosity of donors across the globe, allows us to push boundaries and meet the highest needs of our alumni. **Because of you, we're actively strengthening and adapting our existing programming while also developing new, relevant ways to support our Maize and Blue community.**

▼ *Members of the Michigan Marching Band performing the fight song during Homecoming at Home.*







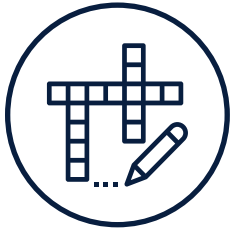
## ALUMNI-OWNED SMALL BUSINESSES

Thanks to you, we created a directory of more than 650 alumni-owned small businesses in an effort to support the futures of your fellow Wolverines who work hard to make a difference in their local communities.



## MICHIGAN STORY TIME

Your gifts affect even the youngest Wolverines (and their working parents). Michigan Story Time brings together notable children's book authors to share recorded readings of their books, providing activities to enjoy from home.



## MICHIGAN ALUMNI ACTIVITIES ZONE

Because of your gifts, alumni have access to curated Michigan-centric activities to express their Michigan pride, wherever they are in the world. They have access to virtual backgrounds for Zoom, coloring pages, and word searches and crossword puzzles covering all things U-M.



## VOICES OF VICTORS PODCAST

Your giving supports one of the newest ventures: The Voices of Victors podcast, produced in partnership with Michigan Alumnus. No matter where you are, the podcast keeps you connected and informed with news and features about the University and its alumni.



## HOMECOMING AT HOME

Your support allowed Michigan pride to fill the homes of Wolverines across the globe for a virtual homecoming experience, complete with a virtual pep rally and trivia night.

**You've helped create career opportunities, virtual experiences, and online tools that keep alumni engaged in this digital climate, no matter their phase of life.**



▲ Michigan Alumni and authors Brad Meltzer '92 (top) and Supriya Kelkar '02 (bottom) reading stories as a part of Michigan Story Time.

# Career

**The Alumni Career program is thriving and our alumni are, too.**

You've helped launch career opportunities and online tools for alumni in every phase of life, especially this new phase of uncharted territory.

Your gifts help us embrace new ways to equip alumni with the resources they need to keep their career on track—even if that means changing their path and goals. Alumni are professionally engaged in ways we've never seen before, transforming their careers, connecting to make change, and redefining entire industries.

“

**It's pretty wonderful that U-M offers these opportunities to its alumni, recognizing that while we received a great education through U-M, opportunity and partnership toward a meaningful career doesn't stop at graduation.”**

Alumni Career participant

**These are just some of the programs, events, and opportunities you've created for alumni striving to reach their highest potential. This is the impact your gifts have made.**

**17**

**WEBINARS  
WITH 5,415 REGISTRANTS**

**196**

**CAREER DESIGN FELLOWSHIP  
PARTICIPANTS REPRESENTING  
36 INDUSTRIES**

**105**

**CAREERLEADER ASSESSMENTS**

This online career assessment analyzes an alum's skills, motivators, and interests to create a detailed report that provides a roadmap of how to develop those skills and address weaknesses.

**34,394**

**CAREER GUIDE VIEWS**

Our Career Guides provide a wealth of information for job seekers and those looking for career advice. In 2020, your gifts allowed us to expand and offer guides for resume and cover letter writing, networking, interviewing, remote working, and salary negotiations.

# Alumni Career Support Scholarship

Through the power and generosity of your gifts, the Alumni Career program created a fund specifically for alumni in need of financial support for their professional journey—whether it's hiring a career coach to land a job, navigating unemployment, pursuing growth opportunities within their current career, or accessing the resources to make a significant career change. The Alumni Career Support Scholarship ensures our alumni never have a gap in professional support. **This is possible because of you.**

“

**I was open to the idea of career change, but uncertain of how to make it happen. The Career Design Fellowship provided the perfect plan for me—great resources, great networking, and exercises that helped me sort through my thoughts and priorities. I can't say enough about how helpful the fellowship has been for me.”**

September 2020 participant

# Alumni Education Gateway

**Because of you, our alumni are always connected to the power of Michigan knowledge.**

The Alumni Education Gateway (AEG) brings the academic resources, courses, current events, seminars, and research of the University and its faculty to alumni globally in an easy-to-navigate digital format. In a time when we have been flooded with information, the virtual library provides alumni with trusted U-M resources, including timely COVID-19 findings from Michigan Medicine.

**Your gifts give us the ability to update the AEG on a daily basis, keeping the content timely, relevant, and appealing to our diverse alumni audience.**

With your support, the Alumni Association has formed strong partnerships across campus to help engage the Wolverine community through several meaningful digital events, like a special screening of the film “John Lewis: Good Trouble,” which was coupled with a panel discussion moderated by Rob Sellers, vice provost for equity and inclusion and chief diversity officer.

**184,954**

TOTAL VISITORS

**337,866**

PAGE VIEWS



# Clubs

Volunteers from across the globe have stepped up to help their local clubs pull together new programming and show the resilience of the Wolverine network—it's our alumni who keep this momentum going, and it's your gifts that make this possible.

Club leaders and volunteers accepted the challenge of pivoting to virtual programming because they knew they had the power of your support and generosity backing them. Your gifts fund training, technical support, and the additional resources necessary for our clubs to host successful and engaging virtual events. **What began as digital opportunities for alumni to connect and socialize eventually turned into so much more.**



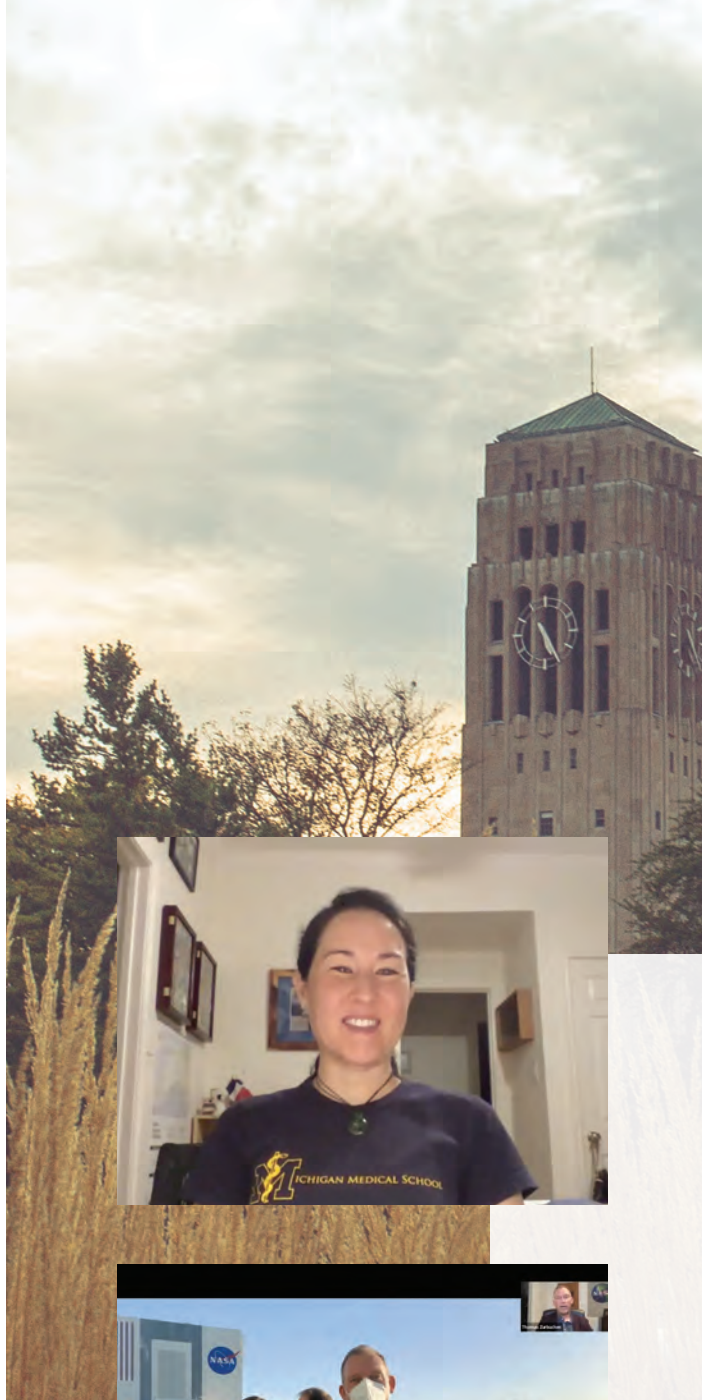
95 DOMESTIC CLUBS



16 INTERNATIONAL CLUBS



700+ CLUB VOLUNTEERS



▲ The Astronaut Doctor, Natacha Chough MD'10, MPH'14 on a Zoom event hosted by the U of M Club of Houston (top) and Thomas H. Zurbuchen (bottom) on a Space, Science and Policy Zoom event hosted by the U of M Club of Washington D.C.

**More than 235 virtual events were created and executed by 37 alumni clubs across the country, allowing over 14,080 alumni to engage and connect with Michigan.**

**41**

**ATHLETIC  
EVENTS**

**36**

**CAREER  
EVENTS**

**4**

**COMMUNITY  
SERVICE  
EVENTS**

**60**

**EDUCATIONAL  
ENRICHMENT  
EVENTS**

**78**

**SOCIAL  
EVENTS**

**8**

**STUDENT  
ENGAGEMENT  
EVENTS**

**From conversations focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion to events featuring notable alumni in fields ranging from fashion to finance, there truly was something for all alumni.**

### **THE ASTRONAUT DOCTOR**

The U of M Club of Houston hosted a virtual event with U-M alumna and NASA flight surgeon Natacha Chough, MD'10, MPH'14. Dr. Chough shared first-hand knowledge of our country's space program and our astronauts, the health risks they face during flight and while on the International Space Station, and the role of flight surgeons in preventing problems.

### **VICTORS' REWIND**

The U of M Club of Palm Beaches pulled together a four-part series on Michigan football that attracted more than 1,100 alumni. These productions focused on conversations with former players, highlighting four historic games.





# CAMP MICHIGANIA

The COVID-19 virus may have prevented a traditional in-person summer at Camp Michigania, but it could never steal the Michigania Magic.

**This year, Camp has needed your support like never before and your incredible generosity is preserving generations of traditions, even through the toughest times.** Every single gift ensures Camp Michigania remains beautiful and beloved until campers can fill cabins and set sail on Walloon Lake once again.

You've supported our seasonal staff that brings the Michigania experience to life. When plans quickly changed your gifts provided them with financial support throughout the summer, even though they were away from Camp. You've helped fund the necessary upgrades and improvements that make Michigania an even safer and cleaner place for all Wolverines. Your support also provided the resources needed to develop virtual summer programming so alumni and their families could experience a taste of Michigania Magic from anywhere in the world.







# MILES FOR MISSING



**Even the youngest Wolverines stepped up to protect the place your gifts make a home.**

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Summer at Camp Michigania is a four-decade tradition for three generations of the Cotzin-Kellner family; it's a crucial part of their lives and a treasure they couldn't imagine a world without. When 10-year-old Shira Kellner learned her summer wouldn't be spent making new Camp memories, she was heartbroken. **But she didn't give in to her sadness—she stepped up with her giving Wolverine spirit and started her own fundraiser.**

Shira biked throughout September to raise support for Michigania. She asked friends, family, and fellow Campers to sponsor her by making gifts toward the Camp Michigania General Fund for each ride she completed during the month.

**"Each summer I count down the days until we get to go to Camp Michigania—it's the very best place in the whole entire world. When I found out we couldn't go, I was so sad and wanted to help so we can go back next summer and continue our traditions.**

◀ *Shira Kellner, future Wolverine*



# MICHIGANIA

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“Camp means so much to me because I love that I can have fun and just be myself. I miss everything about it—the Unicorn and Cookie Man, Walloon Lake, running around with my friends (I call them my ‘Gania Girls!), and all the activities. My whole family comes, too, and I get to have cousin time. Every year, my Savta (grandma) takes the whole family on a very special afternoon sail.

“We all have to help keep Camp the wonderful place it is—I’m so thankful for everyone who supported me and gave money to Miles for Missing Michigan so everyone can hopefully go back next year.”

“Each summer I count down the days until we get to go to Camp Michigan—it’s the very best place in the whole entire world. When I found out we couldn’t go, I was so sad and wanted to help so we can go back next summer and continue our traditions.”

▼ *The Cotzin-Kellner Family enjoying Camp Michigan*



# CLUB SCHOLARSHIPS

**\$1.6 million awarded to 451 club scholarship recipients during the 2020-21 academic year.**

Benancio Rodriguez, '20, is just one of those students you supported. This is his story.

“Do better, go to college—you don’t have to live the life I lived.” Benancio Rodriguez’s grandmother always gave him that wise advice. She was the first catalyst in his pursuit of a higher education; he lived by her motto and followed his dreams.

**Your support is the everlasting catalyst for Benancio’s entire Michigan legacy as a first-generation college student.**

Growing up in a small rural Michigan community, Benancio often wondered if college was in the cards for him—higher education wasn’t prioritized, and opportunities were sparse. “I came from a large, low-income family that just couldn’t offer financial support.”

Benancio’s journey began when he was accepted into his high school’s early college program for high-achieving students, which paid for his enrollment in courses at the local community college. Just one





year out of high school, he had earned his associate degree.

His dreams of a Michigan education began during his research work in community college. As Benancio's passion grew, his instructor-turned-mentor told him there was no better place to study. After he was officially accepted, he attended Campus Day, where he discovered the Michigan Research Community (MRC), now known as Michigan Research and Discovery Scholars.

"After learning about MRC, I didn't think twice," he says. "I knew U-M had the program that would allow me to do what I've always wanted to do."

**When Benancio was awarded a scholarship from the U of M Club of Grand Rapids, he earned the chance to live out his dream to attend and research at the University of Michigan.**

Your support became all the more life-changing when Benancio's grandmother—and main inspiration for his education—lost her battle to cancer. He spent his entire sophomore year dealing with the grief, acting as the patient advocate and beneficiary.

"I was handling a lot of very real responsibilities as a 20-year-old and it was very stressful," he reflects. **"This scholarship removed the financial burden, allowing me to stay at U-M and focus on school and continue my involvement in my research program."**

Benancio says the research community provided a support system and a place he could escape to when he was struggling. "I wouldn't have been part of MRC and had a place to fulfill my passion if it weren't for this scholarship."

The resources you helped provide allowed him to thrive. He worked in research labs, served as a peer adviser, became a teaching assistant, and embraced his entire time on campus.

**"If I hadn't had the financial aid or opportunities from the Grand Rapids club, I never would've gone to college—or, I would've gone to college without ever having the Michigan experience."**

Even when the global pandemic hit and changed the course of his final year at U-M, he had the support he needed.

"It's unfortunate that I didn't get those final picturesque moments," he says. "But from what I learned from my time at U-M, things are going to happen and it's your support system that helps you make the best of it."

After finishing his final semester virtually, Benancio graduated with a major in biochemistry and a minor in Spanish. He is now at UCLA in the molecular biology interdepartmental Ph.D. program researching virology. Benancio plans to continue this critical research and become a professor.

**“If I hadn’t had the financial aid or opportunities from the Grand Rapids club, I never would’ve gone to college—or, I would’ve gone to college without ever having the Michigan experience.”**

Benancio says it's important to him to give back in honor of the opportunities you've given him—even if he can't currently offer financial support, he can always give his time. He's visited middle and high schools in Grand Rapids to share his experience.

"Most of these students are Hispanic like myself; they want to see somebody who also looks like them," he says. "I think that helps make higher education so much more accessible and allows them to see it as, 'I can do that, too.'"

Benancio believes his entire story is a matter of genuine perspective—and, without any pun intended, he says hindsight is 20/20.

**"Your support definitely helped alleviate the financial struggles when I was going through a very difficult time, and I can look back and be truly thankful," he says. "Things can always be worse, but in a very realistic way, it could have been much harder—if not impossible—to handle everything without your support."**

Halfway across the nation, Benancio is pursuing his purpose during a time the world needs it most—a purpose that began the moment he was accepted into the University of Michigan. **He is a true Wolverine, one of the Leaders and Best, because of you.**

*Burton Tower shines red, white  
and blue to show support for  
medical workers in their response  
to COVID-19 on April 8, 2020.*





**BECAUSE OF YOU,  
WE SEE THE LIGHT OF  
WHAT LIES AHEAD.**

WE ARE ON THE DAWN OF A NEW  
HORIZON, LOOKING TOWARD A FUTURE  
FILLED WITH PROMISE, PROGRESS, AND  
OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL WOLVERINES.

**THANK YOU.**



**THANK YOU**



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