YOU’VE HELPED BUILD THIS COMMUNITY
Imagine a college experience without racial or financial barriers, a diverse community where underrepresented students from every walk of life gather to learn, grow, and explore the endless opportunities ahead.

Today, we’re striving to make this a reality for 238 LEAD scholars attending the University of Michigan, and it’s because of you.

Your generous support is the reason we can award LEAD scholarships to admitted students who are pursuing a world-class education, and for that, we sincerely thank you. The LEAD scholarship offers more than financial support—it gives these students both a home base and a launching pad to navigate Michigan.

For many of these students, this scholarship is the one thing that can make their dream of attending the University of Michigan a reality. When LEAD scholar Juan Luis Garcia was awarded his scholarship, he knew he was granted the opportunity to build a future far beyond what he ever imagined for himself and his family.

Sometimes, we don’t stop to think about the power of our giving, so I hope reading Juan’s story reminds you of what your generosity means to the people and community around you. Your support for the LEAD Scholars program is what fuels the minds of our future leaders—those who will one day change the world.

Sincerely,

Ayanne J. McConnell
Senior Director of University/Student Engagement and LEAD Scholars Alumni Association of the University of Michigan
2019-20 LEAD SCHOLAR COHORT

CURRENT LEAD STUDENTS ACROSS ALL THREE CAMPUSES

LEAD ALUMNI
When 8-year-old Juan Luis Garcia emigrated from Guatemala and settled in California with his family, he never imagined he would one day be a Michigan Wolverine. But, one decade later, Juan Luis is walking this campus as a LEAD scholar, and your generous support is what helped get him here.

As a junior in high school, Juan Luis never thought college was in his future. He was focused on financially supporting his mother and three younger siblings—he even helped start a family business. With his siblings looking to him as a father figure and the pressure of his family’s financial strain, Juan Luis began to dream of a better future. He was determined to become a first-generation college student, much like his oldest sister, Lisa, who was attending the University of Michigan and was part of the LEAD community. She encouraged him to apply to Michigan because she wanted him to have the same life-changing experience she had.

Once he was accepted, Juan Luis explored the LEAD Scholars program knowing he needed more financial aid to attend Michigan. His sister was deeply affected by her experience, and he loved the program’s mission and sense of community, so he applied for a LEAD scholarship.
“Financial support from LEAD donors was the determining factor in whether or not I would be able to attend Michigan. If I hadn’t gotten this scholarship, I wouldn’t be here. I know that for a fact.”

When Juan Luis left his immigrant community to come to Michigan, LEAD welcomed him into a new, diverse community that helped him adapt to the world of higher education. Today, he is a sophomore majoring in business and thrives in an environment where he can connect with students who have similar backgrounds and journeys.

Juan Luis often wonders what his life would be like had he stayed in Guatemala or if he hadn’t gotten a LEAD scholarship. Because of you, he doesn’t have to worry about the “what-ifs” or finding ways to pay his way through college.

“Without you, I wouldn’t be here and my life path wouldn’t be the same. You gave me the gift of a future I never thought possible, and you’ve impacted not only my life but the lives of my family for generations to come. Thank you—there aren’t enough words to explain what this scholarship and community mean to me.”
"WITHOUT YOU, I WOULDN’T BE HERE AND MY LIFE PATH WOULDN’T BE THE SAME. YOU GAVE ME THE GIFT OF A FUTURE I NEVER THOUGHT POSSIBLE."

JUAN LUIS GARCIA, CLASS OF 2022
Beyond scholarship aid, your support creates opportunities for scholars to build leadership skills and deepen their impact on the LEAD community. Juan Luis is on the student advisory board and serves as the head of the campus partnership committee, which connects LEAD scholars with resources and other student organizations on campus. As head of the committee, he is focused on diverse social identities and bridging gaps between communities.

“There are spaces where minorities don’t necessarily feel welcome—the intense social climate can make underrepresented communities feel unsafe. So I led a partnership with the Program on Intergroup Relations and hosted a safe space to discuss social identities and learn how to take action and break down these walls.”
A Place for LEADership
Juan Luis experienced the true power of the Michigan alumni network when the LEAD program staff connected him with an internship opportunity at Morgan Stanley Wealth Management in New York. There, he was introduced to a managing director of the firm, Gabriela Teran, ’96. As a U-M alumna and member of the Alumni Association board of directors, she provided mentorship throughout the interview process. Juan Luis knows the professional connections and personal relationships he’s made through LEAD are people he will keep in touch with for the rest of his life.

“I know I wouldn’t have gotten that internship without the help of Gabriela and the LEAD network, and donors make these opportunities possible. Since I’m so far away from home, the scholars and LEAD program staff are my school family. I’m so lucky to have all of these people in my corner.”