History of the Ecuador Exchange Program

The Ecuador program began in Quito in 1988 when the focus of the Spanish Seminar and Beloit’s Spanish language studies was changed from Spain to Latin America to reflect faculty members’ scholarship and student interest. Originally taking the form of a seminar led and partially taught by a Beloit faculty member, the program later involved direct enrollment in the Pontifical Catholic University of Quito, also known as PUCE or La Católica. This arrangement allowed PUCE students to come to Beloit College for a semester or year of study as exchange students and for a PUCE instructor of Spanish to teach at the college for several years. In 2002, Beloit College biology students studied Spanish at PUCE before engaging in biology field work in various locations in the country.

In fall 2004, Beloit College students also began studying at the University of San Francisco de Quito (USFQ). A formal exchange agreement between USFQ and Beloit College was adopted in the 2004/05 academic year, with USFQ students enrolling in Beloit College the following year. Beloit College students began studying in the Galápagos on USFQ’s Galápagos Academic Institute for the Arts and Sciences (GAIAS) program in spring 2006. GAIAS was created by USFQ with the support of the Galapagos National Park Service in an effort to promote both biological conservation and sustainable development in the Islands.

A number of Beloit College faculty delegations have visited Ecuador, most recently to work on the development of the course *Quito in Transition* and to visit the GAIAS program.