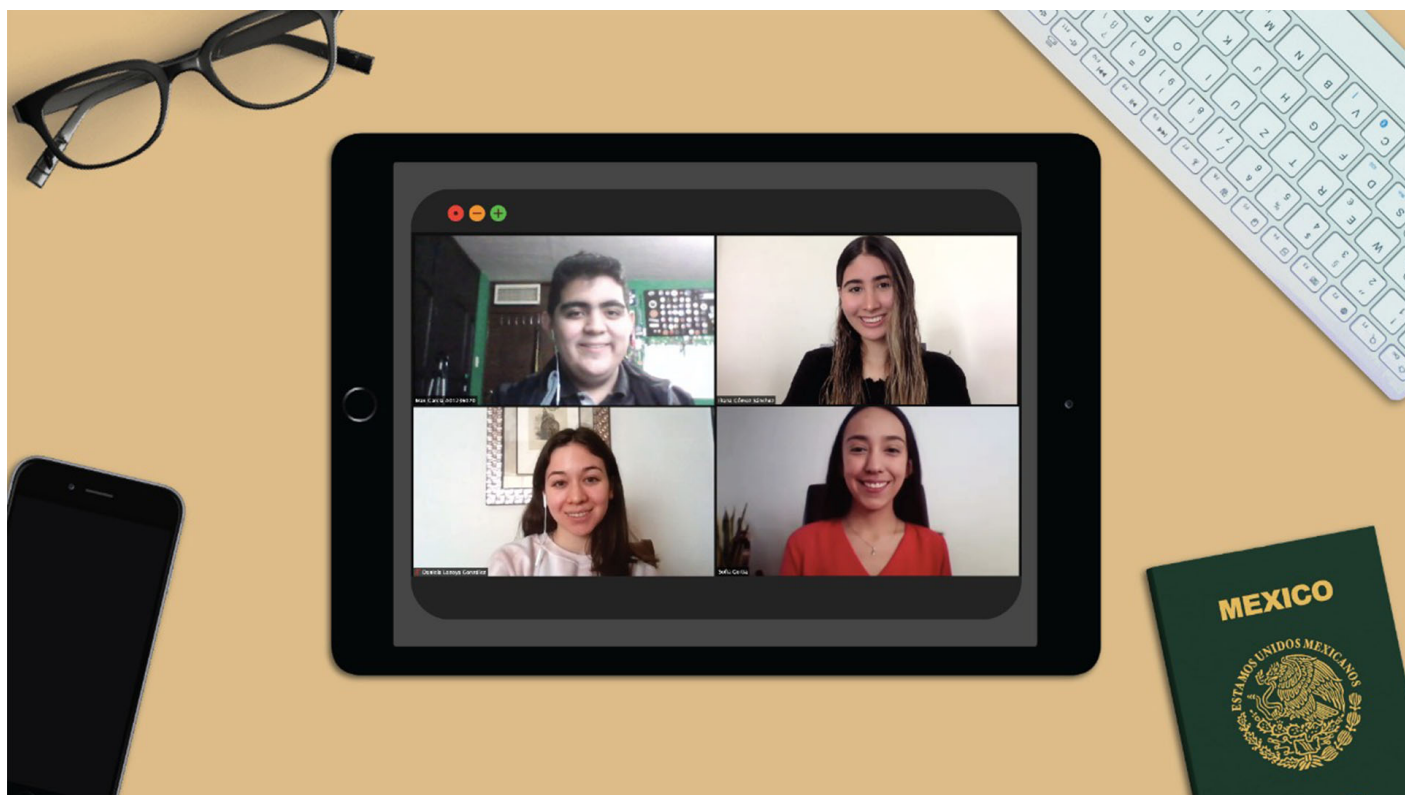


# Young Mexicans win global virtual exchange competition



Four students from [Tecnológico de Monterrey's Laguna campus](#) have won first place at the University of Toronto's [Global Learning Case Competition](#) with their **Virtual Passport Program** project.

Undergraduate students **Sofía Elena Goitia Favela, Daniela Lozoya González, Mayra Iliana Gómez Sánchez, and Max Eduardo García Esquivel** beat **21 teams** from different countries with their proposal.

The competition involved presenting a project providing a solution to the problem of **international student mobility** caused by the **COVID-19** pandemic.

*"Our proposal focused on what we could do with tools that we already have in order to provide a better international experience to students who want to participate in **global learning** and to include more students,"* explained Sofía Goitia.



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**The competition took place between February 16 and 18.** Several days later, the group received news of having won first prize via email.

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### **Virtual Passport Program**

After learning about the competition rules, the team submitted their project, which consisted of a **video pitch and a written proposal**, via email.

This included a portfolio of passports including different **intercultural skills** and activities to develop them, the **use of technology and platforms**, spaces for interaction with international students, relevant simulators, international networks for contacts, and multicultural fairs.

The proposal from these Laguna campus students recommends the **use of platforms** such as **Gather Town** and **Virbela**, which use **avatars** that can move through a virtual campus, to get closer to people and interact with them via computer cameras and microphones.

It also **includes those students who cannot afford the costs of accommodation and travel** for a face-to-face experience.

*“The **experience is still online** but is more educational than just a video call. We also included a passport that you can add skills to, such as success in the **Tec21 Educational Model**, which we’re currently using at the Tec,” explained Max García.*

This educational model features four components: **challenge-based learning**; **flexibility** as to how, when and where learning takes place; an environment with **inspiring teachers**; and a **memorable university experience**.

*“Our proposal seeks to **adapt international experiences** to make them more accessible. We know that we cannot replace going to another country, and that’s not what we are looking to do. Rather, we want to bring those opportunities **closer to those people** who don’t have the resources to participate or have different abilities,” added Iliana Gómez.*



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### **Support from Laguna campus**

**22 teams participated in** the University of Toronto’s Global Learning Case Competition, representing universities in **Canada, the Netherlands, Azerbaijan, Chile, China, India, Bolivia, Pakistan, Hong Kong, and Mexico.**

The first-prize winners received support from **Lidia Chong Alcalá, a specialist in International Programs at Laguna campus**, who was able to validate their project.

*“What we saw with Lidia was very important: learning that there are students who want to go on an exchange but don’t have the means to participate in a traditional program because of all the costs involved in doing so,” said Sofía Goitia.*

*“We knew that it was possible to do so via online **International Programs**. So, that was our starting point, and from there we developed the whole proposal,” she added.*

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