Dear stakeholders,

On Friday March 13, 2020, we said goodbye to our campus without prior notice or knowing when we were going to meet again. This last year represented one of the toughest challenges for the higher education industry due to COVID-19. It was full of uncertainty, making it almost impossible to make decisions as an institution. However, as I write this letter, I can affirm that we, as Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ), have succeeded in the difficult steps we had to take.

Currently, we have over 10 thousand students enrolled in our 45 and 28 undergraduate and graduate programs respectively. Our closest competitor as to number of students is Escuela Politécnica del Litoral (ESPOL), but their number of academic programs is a little bit more varied in terms of its graduate programs. That's why we must also consider Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador (PUCE) as our competitor given that they have almost the same mix of undergraduate and graduate programs as we do but coming across over 23 thousand students. Another important aspect about us and these universities is that the proportion of students by level of studies, is mostly represented by undergraduate students.

To support my initial statement of us being successful in this past year, we must look at the results of the two most important world rankings for universities, *QS* and *THE*. Considering that rankings publish their reports for the upcoming year, these rankings have recently posted their annual results for 2022 in which we are the number one university in Ecuador once again. This is a position that we have been able to hold for the last four years in both rankings while our competitors have conveyed among the top four places.

However, the success achieved is not enough for us. In this manner, we examine in detail the results of both rankings. Regarding QS, their methodology considers five criteria to obtain the final score: research impact and productivity, teaching commitment, employability, online impact, and internationalization. These criteria consider different key indicators, but I want us to focus in the two most important that correspond to the 50% of the final score for the ranking, Academic Reputation (30%) and Employer Reputation (20%). Considering the Academic Reputation, in the last two years we have already missed the first place against PUCE, which means that we must improve the perceptions of academics from around the world regarding our teaching and research quality. To achieve this, we will ask our faculty to get in touch with their colleagues from international universities to encourage them to remember the splendid projects that have been developed in cooperation with us. Concerning the Employer Reputation, we are still above our competitors, but we have had a strong decrease in the past four years, which implies that employers don't identify our institution as the best source of the most competent, innovative, and effective graduates. To improve this metric, we will work with the career services team to invite the biggest companies in the country, and the companies run by our alumni to different quarterly events where they can interact with our students and get in touch with their abilities by making presentations of the most impactful research and community outreach projects.

With respect of THE, their methodology considers five areas: teaching, research, citations, international outlook, and industry income. In this case, 70% of the final score for the ranking is already represented by the first two indicators, 36% and 34% respectively. By looking at the teaching category, we have had a growth that has allowed us to hold the first place over our competitors, but we cannot relax ourselves because this indicator is mainly based on an academic reputation survey. So, we have another strong reason to support or previously proposed action of getting in touch with international colleagues to improve our score. On the research category, its main component is again the reputation survey, so our latest strategies also hold powerful to help us keep the first place obtained for this metric. Nonetheless, ESPOL has showed a steady and strong growth in the past years, meaning that we must start implementing our proposed approaches in the beginning of next year before the next reputation surveys are sent.

Evaluating the number of followers we have on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter we clearly have a lead over our competitors nationwide and we must take advantage of this to strengthen our academic reputation by posting our contributions developed in collaboration with other institutions worldwide and reinforce our employer reputation by producing posts that showcase the development of our graduates in the industry.

However, assessing the number of followers we have on LinkedIn we see an improvement opportunity. In this platform we fall behind PUCE's first place, and we have been relegated to the third place. As LinkedIn is more professional than the other platforms this could be the potential reason why we don't have the first place on the Academic Reputation survey developed by QS. In this manner, we must analyze the type of posts our competitors are developing, so that we can generate together with the digital marketing team and career services a strategy to increase our social media engagement. We need to attract professional users by posting results of our latest research and community outreach projects, and by exhibiting the achievements of our faculty, staff, students, and alumni.

To finish, I want to make it clear that with these proposals we don't only want to be the best university on the final ranking score, we want to be the best university on every metric so that our students get what they deserve by being part of USFQ.

Number of Students (Thousands)

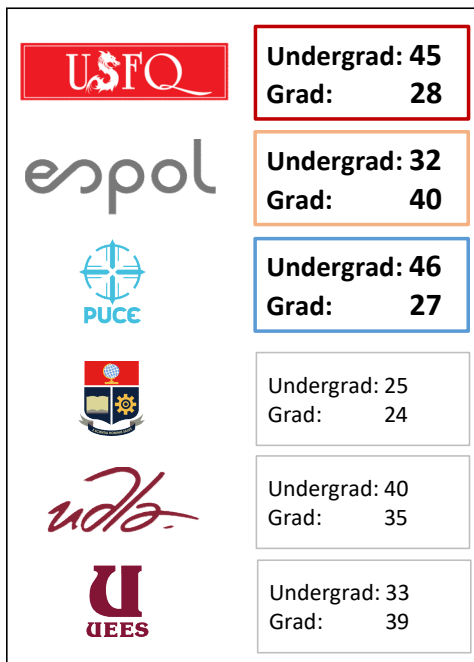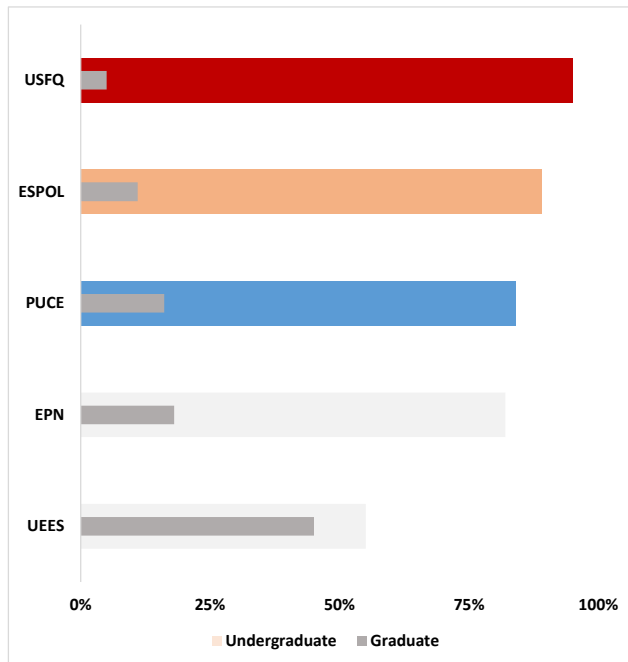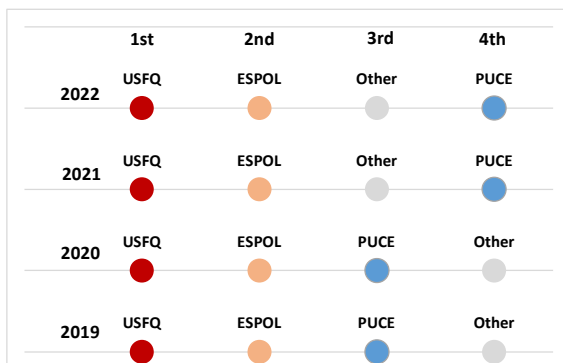USFQ **10.1** | espol **11.6** | PUCE **23.7**

Number of Academic Programs

USFQ	Undergrad: 45	Grad: 28
ESPOL	Undergrad: 32	Grad: 40
PUCE	Undergrad: 46	Grad: 27
EPN	Undergrad: 25	Grad: 24
UDLA	Undergrad: 40	Grad: 35
UEES	Undergrad: 33	Grad: 39

Proportion of Students by Level (%)

Categories: USFQ, ESPOL, PUCE, EPN, UEES
X-axis: 0% 25% 50% 75% 100%
Legend: Undergraduate, Graduate

Position in *QS Ranking* (Ecuador)

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
2022	USFQ	ESPOL	Other	PUCE
2021	USFQ	ESPOL	Other	PUCE
2020	USFQ	ESPOL	PUCE	Other
2019	USFQ	ESPOL	PUCE	Other

Position in *THE Ranking* (Ecuador)

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
2022	USFQ	ESPOL	Other	PUCE
2021	USFQ	Other	ESPOL	PUCE
2020	USFQ	PUCE	ESPOL	
2019	USFQ	ESPOL		
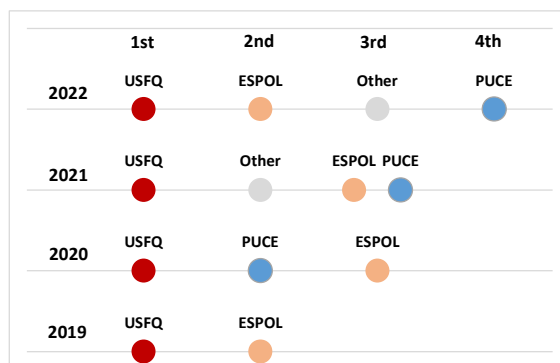
USFQ: Universidad San Francisco de Quito
ESPOL: Escuela Politécnica del Litoral
PUCE: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador

Other Universities:
EPN: Escuela Politécnica Nacional
UEES: Universidad de Especialidades Espiritu Santo
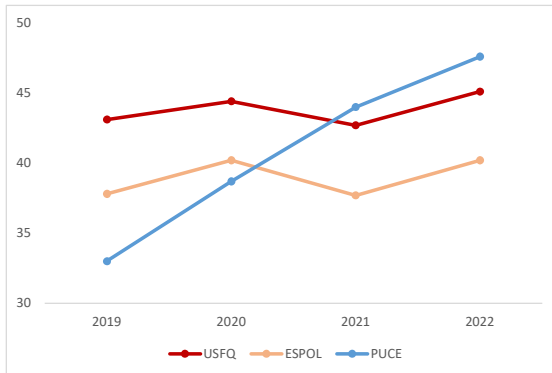**UDLA:** Universidad de las Américas
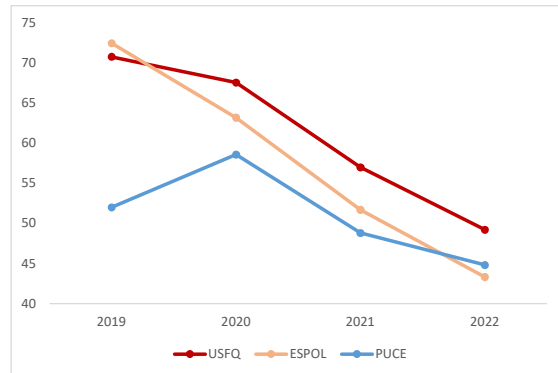
Rankings:
QS: Quacquarelli Symonds Limited
THE: Times Higher Education
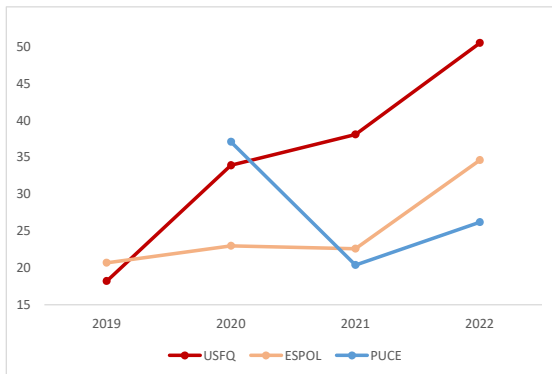*Note*: Years for THE have been advanced one year to match QS.
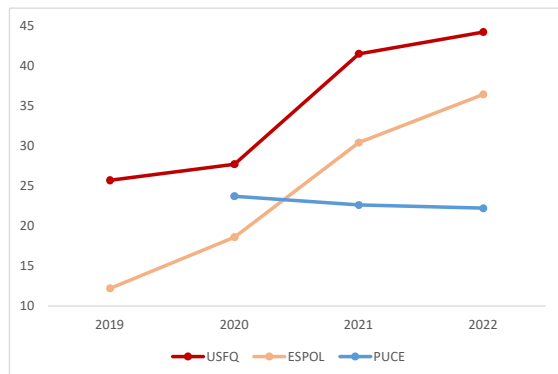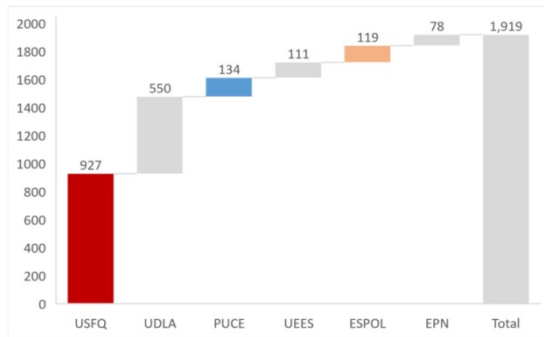
4 Year QS Academic Reputation Score

USFQ ESPOL PUCE

4 Year QS Employer Reputation Score

USFQ ESPOL PUCE

4 Year THE Teaching Score

USFQ ESPOL PUCE

4 Year THE Research Score

USFQ ESPOL PUCE

Number of Followers on Facebook (Thousands)

USFQ	UDLA	PUCE	UEES	ESPOL	EPN	Total
927	550	134	111	119	78	1,919

Number of Followers on Instagram (Thousands)

USFQ	UDLA	UEES	ESPOL	PUCE	EPN	Total
52	44	38	29	29	7	199
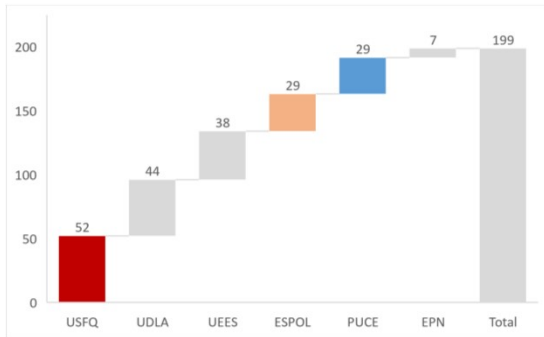
Number of Followers on Twitter (Thousands)

USFQ	ESPOL	UDLA	UEES	PUCE	EPN	Total
80	63	54	48	35	20	299
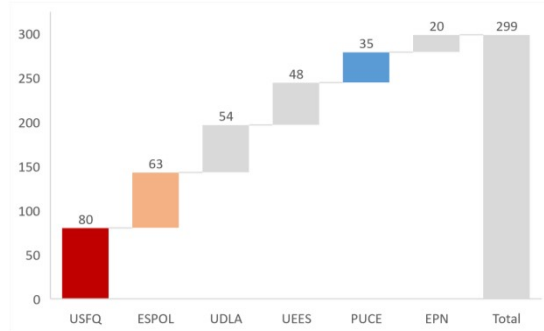
Number of Followers on LinkedIn (Thousands)

PUCE	UDLA	USFQ	EPN	ESPOL	UEES	Total
62	62	60	33	33	31	281