

Tulane SoPA student turns class project into a regional conference

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asagnard@tulane.edu



Laura Rodriguez-Mascorro's final capstone project at Tulane SoPA led to a regional conference for her campus community and beyond. (Photo by UC Merced)

Laura Rodriguez-Mascorro, an [Emergency & Security Studies](#) student at the [Tulane School of Professional Advancement](#) (Tulane SoPA), applied the knowledge and skills she attained from her courses to execute the inaugural [Safety Conference](#) at the University of California, Merced (UC Merced) this fall.

Rodriguez-Mascorro, who serves as the emergency manager at UC Merced, saw her vision to create a culture of preparedness across campus come to fruition. The conference, held Sept. 27, welcomed over 250 guests across her campus, and within the greater San Joaquin Valley.

“I knew that there was an upcoming capstone project, so I just kept spinning my wheels thinking about how this project could engage our [UC Merced] campus community,” said Rodriguez-Mascorro. “It went from just being a department-specific training to a campus training and eventually a regional event.”

Attendees learned from respected leaders in emergency and disaster preparedness. Conference speakers included representatives from the FBI, U.S. Secret Service, UC Berkeley, University of California, California State University, Stanford University, California Highway Patrol, the U.S. Department of Education and more.

“Laura is the definition of a “pracademic” – she’s using her experience and education to help her work colleagues and the larger community, says Michael Wallace, Ed.D., Program Director of the Tulane SoPA Emergency & Security Studies program. “ Laura possesses the best traits needed by future emergency management professionals – being active, compassionate, and leading by example.”

Rodriguez-Mascorro is currently pursuing a [Master of Professional Studies \(MPS\) in Emergency Management](#). As an active professional with over seven years of experience in the field, she says the program coursework is especially relevant, and led to her ultimate decision to enroll at the school.

“When searching for a program to pursue my master’s degree, nothing drew my attention as much as Tulane because it is very much focused on emergency management. The coursework is very applicable and it’s built for the next generation of emergency managers.”

While emergency management was not Rodriguez-Mascorro’s original career choice, she found a need for it in her community, and it quickly became her passion.

The inaugural UC Merced Safety Conference stands as a testament to Rodriguez-Mascorro’s unwavering commitment to safety and emergency preparedness. As an emergency manager and a student, she has shown the power of dedication, vision, and the importance of fostering a culture of preparedness not only on her campus but beyond.



Attendees included emergency managers, first responders, crisis counselors, Clery Act coordinators, university and K-12 school administrators, local elected officials, and more (Photo by UC Merced).