

Chavón La Escuela de Diseño:
The history and legacy of a school of design and its community
of artists and designers in the Dominican Republic

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ABSTRACT

**Chavón La Escuela de Diseño:
The history and legacy of a school of design
and its community of artists and designers in the Dominican Republic**

Gabriela Mejía

Founded in 1983, Chavón La Escuela de Diseño is a post-secondary art and design school located in the Dominican Republic. It has been identified as the country's most renowned art school, maintaining a reputation of excellence and standing apart from all other art schools in the country due to its program structure, pedagogical methods and strong community of artists.

The purpose of this research is to document the untold history and legacy of this school to understand its educational philosophy as told by its students, teachers and administrators. The analysis of the participants stories aim to provide an understanding of Chavón's contribution to post-secondary art education in the Dominican Republic and to explore how the congruence of modernist and postmodernist orientations in Chavón La Escuela de Diseño's curriculum has been successful in the training and professional placement of its students.

This research highlights how the school has been able to survive by going through constant changes, building a strong sense of community, promoting hard work and discipline, and teaching a curriculum based on students needs and industry demands. This has led to the creation of a strong community of artists and designers in the Dominican Republic thanks to the legacy of Chavón La Escuela de Diseño.

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Next, I would like to thank the participants of this study who accepted to be part of it without any hesitation. Their willingness to share their experiences and contribute to this study is a testament to the strong sense of community of Chavón La Escuela de Diseño.

Finally, this study is dedicated to Chavón La Escuela de Diseño, to my friends and teachers who shaped my life and to the entire Chavón community for always keeping the school's spirit alive.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

With its original campus located in the southeast of the Dominican Republic in the town of La Romana, Chavón La Escuela de Diseño has served as a source of artistic education for young adults since its foundation in 1983. Over the years, the school has been considered a pioneer in the teaching of art and design and a synonym of quality and excellence in the field of post-secondary art education in the country. Locally, the school has received recognition due to a significant number of graduate placement in the design industry as well as an extensive list of winners in important local competitions such as the National Biennale and León Jiménez Art contest. There is also an extensive number of graduates that have developed important careers in international businesses in the fields of fashion, graphic design and fine arts, thereby demonstrating that a curriculum emphasizing training in design and industrial development is effective for students' success.

The Dominican Republic has the National System of Higher Education which grants the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology the authority to accredit, regulate and supervise all Dominican higher education institutions. According to Germosén and Padrón (2013) in their study of the evolution of Dominican higher education, higher education in the country consists of 49 institutions of which 34 are universities, 9 are specialized institutes and 6 are technical institutes of higher studies.

Despite the significant contributions of Chavón La Escuela de Diseño to Dominican culture, the school is not on this list because it is not accredited by the Dominican Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology.

It is important to note that Dominican students who wish to embark in a career in the art and design field have limited access to study in the country. Dominican private universities are generally out of reach for low-income applicants, and have limited visual fine arts programs.

The topic of this research is directly connected to my personal and professional life since I am a graduate of Chavón and a former academic staff member. I acknowledge that my attachment to the school influences my interpretations and analysis of this research; thus, I position myself as an insider-researcher, defined by Breen (2007) as the researcher who chooses to study a group to which he or she belongs to. This fact may have influenced my objectivity in the course of this study, but in order to maintain a certain level of accuracy in my findings, I implemented specific strategies to ensure credibility such as gathering a comprehensive collection of data from multiple sources including documents, archival data, direct observation and others (Becker et al., 2005; Stake, 2000; Yin, 1998). Instead of identifying my insider-researcher position as a disadvantage, I acknowledge the familiarity and emotional connection I have to the topic as a value that allowed me to gain a greater understanding of my research topic.

As a member of the Chavón community, I have always highly valued the learning experience and relationships I acquired at this school. This experience helped form my character and has served as a solid foundation for my professional life. I've always understood that there was a "magical formula" in Chavón's program of lifelong learning and lifelong relationships among classmates and professors. Now, more than a decade after graduating, while completing my masters degree in art education, my perception of this school as a unique example of post-secondary art education has been reaffirmed and the desire to identify and define this "magical formula" has become relevant.

As an art education graduate student, my research interests were influenced by three major understandings: (a) the specialized study of art education history is still a limited field (Garnet, 2017); (b) there is a general lack of literature pertaining to studio art education at the post-secondary level (Fitch, 2016; Salazar 2013); and (c) there is an ongoing tension between modernist and post-modernist approaches to the curriculum (i.e. applied vs. fine arts and the traditional vs. the modern models) (Kahmi 2017; Quinn 2006; Stankiewicz, 2009). These understandings have led me to want to write about the history and legacy of a school that I believe addresses these issues. I examined these issues by studying Chavón's history, program structure and pedagogical methods.

I have formulated the following questions to guide my research on Chavon La Escuela de Diseño: What are the pedagogical components of post-secondary studio art education? What makes Chavón La Escuela de Diseño unique? What do the oral accounts from graduates, students, faculty or administrators associated with the school tell us about the school's impact in the community over the last four decades? And lastly, how did the school create a legacy of artists and designers in the Dominican Republic?

The History of Chavón La Escuela de Diseño

Until now and despite Chavón's impact in the art and design field in the Dominican Republic and internationally, there has been no academic research conducted on the establishment and development of Chavón La Escuela de Diseño. The status of this school and its history is largely unknown in the international art education field. However, the history of Casa de Campo as written by Peacock & Despradel (2017) has served to provide background information on how the school originated. In the next paragraphs, I will summarize the insights into the creation of Chavón La Escuela de Diseño that Peacock & Despradel's publication provides.

To begin the story of Chavón La Escuela de Diseño, it is relevant to describe the history of its location: Casa de Campo and Altos de Chavón in La Romana, Dominican Republic. In the 1960s, life in the town of La Romana centered around the sugar mill production. In a vast acreage, used mainly to grow sugar cane, a group of visionaries saw that there was an opportunity for tourism and thus created Casa de Campo, known today as one of the main luxurious resorts in the Caribbean. (Peacock & Despradel, 2017).

One of these visionaries was Charles Bluhdorn, president of Gulf and Western Industries. Born in Vienna in 1926, Bluhdorn spent his early years moving around Europe, before emigrating to the United States in the early 1940s. By the late 1960s, Bluhdorn, had several companies under the umbrella of Gulf and Western Industries including the publishing company Simon & Schuster, Madison Square Garden Corp. (owners of the New York Knicks), the movie studio Paramount Pictures, and since 1967, the world's largest sugar mill, Central Romana, in the Dominican Republic. His first tourism project, Casa de Campo, opened its doors in 1974 and quickly became a hedonist's paradise; a revolving door of celebrities, complete with a private airstrip, golf courses and luxurious residences built along the seashore. (Peacock & Despradel, 2017, p. 3)

Inside this luxurious resort Casa de Campo, not too far away from state-of-the-art golf courses, is Altos de Chavón: a replica Mediterranean village set on a cliff top that overlooks the Chavón River, surrounded by tropical gardens and completely isolated from urban distractions. Peacock & Despradel (2017) write that this village was designed by the architect and movie set designer,

Roberto Coppa, well known for his design on film sets for Fellini and Visconti. Coppa was chosen to design Bluhdorn's idea of an artists' colony: a village that would become a home for painters, sculptors, writers and artisans. (p.11)

This is where the Altos de Chavón Cultural Center Foundation was established as a not-for-profit cultural and educational institution. The Foundation contributed to the enrichment of the intellectual, artistic, and cultural panorama of the Dominican Republic. It comprised several interrelated components: the Artists in Residence program, The Gallery, The Regional Museum of Archaeology (which documents the indigenous legacy of the island in its vast collection of indigenous objects) and Chavón La Escuela de Diseño.



Figure 1: Construction of the first phase of Altos de Chavón, showing the chapel in the foreground; Workers painstakingly lay out the cobble streets, photographed in the late 1970s. Image courtesy of Casa Life Magazine, 2017.

In 1983, the school was founded with the aim to satisfy the country's growing commercial and industrial demands for creative talent and ever since, young adults from different parts of the country and the world, embark on an intensive two-year studio-oriented college level program in the areas of Visual Communications, Film, Fashion and Fine Arts. The intensive program, highly practical in focus and industry-oriented, provided a solid education that allowed participants to compete nationally and internationally as design and art professionals.

Over the years, the term "chavonero" has been utilized to refer to a graduate of the school. The term has become a badge that students wear with pride and in the Dominican Republic, it is synonymous with a qualified and well-trained professional in the art and design industry. To this day, there are more than 1,700 chavoneros from the Dominican Republic and other parts of the world.



Figure 2: An aerial view of the first phase of the artists' village of Altos de Chavón. Image courtesy of Casa Life Magazine, 2017

Since its foundation, the school has been affiliated with the Parsons School of Design in New York, one of the most important institutions of art education in North America. After completion of the two-year program at Chavón, this affiliation allows chavoneros to apply to Parsons to complete a third year in their area of specialty, thus having the opportunity of earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Parsons. Credentials from Parsons as well as Chavón make the graduates highly competitive in the international art and design academic professional fields. Each year, the school awards high honors students with a scholarship to continue their studies at Parsons. For many Chavón students, from the very beginning of their studies, the possibility of undertaking a third year of studies at Parsons becomes a highly desirable goal.

An important event that changed the history of the school was the opening of a new campus in the city of Santo Domingo in 2016. Since 1994, in Santo Domingo, the school had a small campus where continuing education courses for adults, children and adolescents were offered. The difference between the two locations was always clear among the community: Students went to La Romana for two intensive years to become professionals in the areas of Communication Design, Fashion Design and Fine Arts while in Santo Domingo, students took short courses of a broad range of subjects such as drawing, photography, writing and others.

In 2016, due to a significant decrease of students enrolled at the campus in La Romana, and the incredibly high financial investment the school needed to keep going, the two-year college program was separated between the two campuses. At the original campus in La Romana, the program of Fine Arts was maintained along with the addition of a new program in Film Studies. It was understood that these two programs would benefit from the isolation provided at the Romana campus. The programs of Communication Design and Fashion Design were moved to Santo Domingo with the aim of integrating these students into the city's fast-moving and growing art and design scene.



Figure 3: Chavón Santo Domingo campus. 2016. Retrieved from: <https://chavon.edu.do/eng/event/open-house-campus-santo-domingo/>

This shift was not accepted by the community of chavoneros, who claimed that the learning experience outside the Chavón La Romana campus location, free from urban distractions, would lose its essence. La Romana Campus had certain characteristics that were considered as key aspects of the learning program. These characteristics included the isolated majestic location, the short walking distance between student dorms and studio classrooms and professors' residences: these factors created a strong community and a hard-working environment. Despite the absence of these characteristics in the Santo Domingo campus, the learning outcomes for the students in Santo Domingo inform how the program has managed to maintain longevity despite its location, by keeping its traditions through a specialized and intensive curriculum and the dedication of the faculty in fostering the vision of excellence the school is known for.

CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

Studio Art Education

This chapter provides an explanation as to how this research becomes anchored in the question: What are the components of post-secondary studio art pedagogy that can be identified in Chavón's program?

To begin, it is relevant to highlight that there is a general lack of literature and empirical research pertaining to studio art education (Fitch, 2016). Salazar (2013) revealed that very little scholarly research in the United States has focused on teaching and learning in college studio art classrooms. Similarly, Salazar (2013) references Bok (2006) and Singerman (1999) informing how historically, neither formal research of teaching nor informal discussion of pedagogical practice have been part of the post-secondary institutional culture. However, there are a few limited studies on post-secondary studio art, that serve to inform the pedagogical structures that exist in it, conducted by authors such as Budge (2012) and Zehner, Forsyth, Musgrave, Neale, de la Harpe, Peterson, Frankham, Wilson and Watson (2009).

Learning and teaching art in higher education

In order to provide an understanding of the art and design pedagogy in higher education, Budge (2012) delivers one relevant study on the implications of learning and teaching in art and design in higher education: employability, creativity and efficiency.

In their study of Australian Universities, Marginson and Considine (2000) inform how universities have become deeply pragmatic, placing a high value on courses that are perceived to lead directly to employment outcomes, due to an environment in which the job market is emphasized.

Referring to creativity, Budge cites McWilliam & Dawson (2008) and McWilliam & Hauka (2008) informing that there is a growing pressure on universities to be creative, to teach creativity, and to produce graduates who are creative, not only in disciplines that have traditionally been associated with creativity, such as art and design, but also in other disciplines as well. (p. 8)

The last key area identified in Budge's study refers to the *efficiency model* prevalent in post-secondary education. He notes that the majority of art and design courses consist mostly of studio-based learning, small sized groups and that they do not fit into the efficiency model currently valued in higher education where most classes are taught through the lecture/tutorial model and where the teacher-student ratio is much higher than in studio-based courses. (Budge 2012, p. 9)

Similarly, Budge notes the criticisms that exist around studio art teaching including how studio courses can be overly reliant on subjective assessment and feedback models, leaving learners in doubt as to the exact focus of their evaluations. However, Budge identifies some of the positive features of studio-based learning such as the critique and peer-based culture of studio, which generate inspiration in a disciplinary culture focused on creating and making, thereby modeling the real work environment of many artists and designers. (p. 10)

The structure and pedagogy of Studio art education

This leads me to the central pedagogical model within art and design disciplines: studio practice as the basis for teaching and learning. Zehner (2009) claims that the essences of the studio-based teaching are seen to include creative and reflective thinking and a focus on integrative design in the context of a project. The studio is where learning emerges through action, it is an investigative and creative process driven by research, exploration and experimentation, and critique and re-

flection. Studio teaching and learning can be distinguished by its emphasis on project-based work; learning through praxis; learning through workshops; and learning through first-hand observation. (Zehner, 2009).

Following from these characteristics, Zehner (2009) suggests that art and design studios need to be understood in terms of four essential dimensions: a studio culture and network of people (students and teachers) who build a creative community; a mode of teaching and learning characterized by processes of critical reflection; small class sizes and periods of individual face-to-face contact with teachers; a program of projects and activities that reflect and integrate professional practice; and a physical space or constructed environment including teaching and workshop spaces, tools and equipment and technical assistance appropriate to project needs. (p. 26)

According to the Studio Teaching Project Survey of Academics (2009), the factors that contribute to ideal and 'best experience' studio teaching outcomes are: the quality of the studio project, quality of the teaching; a positive studio atmosphere; and a reasonable class and group sizes. The survey also provides examples of effective practice such as: feedback and assessment; foundation-year structures (first years of a program that focuses on teaching the fundamentals of a practice); interdisciplinary learning and teaching; experiential learning; technology-enabled learning and teaching; industry-related projects; and studio management. (Zehner et al., 2009) (p. 57).

Similarities among art and design schools

In terms of their development over time, many art and design schools share similar stories. From initial, humble origins, over decades, they gradually become important cultural and educational institutions with local, provincial, national and sometimes international influence. The following are some examples.

The Nova Scotia School of Art and Design

Located in Nova Scotia, Canada and founded in 1887 The Nova Scotia School of Art and Design became an integral part of Nova Scotia's cultural life. This school has offered courses in fine and industrial arts, teacher training courses and art classes for children. Soucy and Pierce (1993) document the evolution of the school, including important changes in its curriculum, changes in its faculty and the financial and political changes that influenced its history throughout the years. The authors report how the school's alumni represent Canada's renowned artists, designers, art curators and arts administrators. (Soucy and Pierce, 1993).

The Art Department of Central Technical School, Toronto, Ontario

In his study about The Art Department at Central Technical School (CTS) in Toronto, Canada, Garnet (2015) provides a history of Canada's oldest and longest-running technical fine arts education programs. By utilizing the lived experiences of the men and women who formed part of its community and telling their stories, Garnet addresses the institutional identity, the school culture and the legacy of an important visual art program that is little known in the history of art education.

For this research I was inspired by Garnet (2015) and his study on the Art Department at the Central Technical School (CTS) in Toronto. His research based on the 122 year history of the Central Technical School provides information about the program, revealing certain similarities to the

Chavón program such as: the development of an artistic community with its own unique culture, values and tradition (pp. 83), the creation of a legacy of core values that included building an artistic community and a dedication to craftsmanship and quality (pp. 83), and the work of a school to break the tensions between industrial and fine art to produce both skilled artists and designers (pp. 22). I was inspired to look closely into Garnet's findings and see what similarities can be found in the oral accounts of the history of CTS and Chavón La Escuela de Diseño.

In the next chapter, I present and discuss the research method used to study the history and development of Chavón La Escuela de Diseño.

CHAPTER 3 - METHOD & PARTICIPANTS

Research method

According to Stankiewicz (2007), the interest in institutional histories is growing among art educators as an approach to historical research. Art education historians such as Garnet (2015) and Soucy & Pearse (1993) have followed closely the developments in the field of historiography that provide information on issues of historical importance to the art education field. They have written specific and localized histories of selected art education institutions. These histories give voice to students, teachers and administrators, and inform us about the educational contexts, the origins of a school's beliefs, curriculum influences and school culture as well as providing documentation and an examination of the settings and situation in which the teaching of art and design occurs.

In the development of this research, I used a qualitative case study approach informed by Yin (1994) as a method to understand, in depth, Chavón La Escuela de Diseño as a real life phenomenon along with its contextual conditions. As a result, this is an interpretative research that involves historical research methods to study and reveal the history of a school based on oral histories, giving value to different stories that demonstrate how life events affect people and how people give meaning to these events.

Oral history narratives

The historical accounts written by Garnet (2015) and Soucy & Pearse (1993) provided the idea to construct the history of Chavón La Escuela de Diseño by analyzing the oral accounts of the different members of its community. Their stories inform about the institution and its culture from a holistic perspective, rather than simply recording dates and events. In order to create these narratives, I used interviews as my main source of data collection.

Informed by D.K. van den Hoonaard (2012), in-depth interviews were utilized as a form of data collection for this research. This format allowed the interviewees to explain their experiences, attitudes, feelings and definitions in their own terms and in ways that are meaningful to them. (p. 102) The "active interview" approach was also implemented in this research, focusing on what participants say, how they say it, how they behave in relationship to the interviewer and the interview process. (D.K. van den Hoonaard, 2012, p. 105)

Interview transcripts and recordings

Interviews were conducted virtually and a comprehensive collection of data was implemented using multiple methods including interview recordings and interview transcripts. Kvale (2009) informs that recordings offer a unique opportunity for analyzing the interpersonal interaction in an interview. The same author writes that researchers who transcribe their own interviews will learn much about their own interviewing styles and will have the social and emotional aspects of the interview situation present or reawakened during the transcription, already having started the analysis of the meaning of what was said. (p. 180)

Kvale (2009) also informs that a transcript is a translation from an oral narrative mode into a written discourse. Therefore, the transcription of the interview conversation to a written form involves an abstraction, where the tone of voice, the intonations and the breathing can be lost. (p. 178)

Following this approach, since the interviews took place at a distance using computer-based communication software (i.e. Zoom), through virtual screens, I was able to record via the computer camera the body language, laughter and pauses of the participants, allowing me to maintain the social and emotional aspects of the interviews.

Analysis of data

The data analysis of this research was conducted through the grounded theory approach informed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as a systematic, qualitative or quantitative procedure used to generate a theory. This procedure consisted on a simultaneous collection and analysis of data where the theory emerged from the data instead of a pre-existing theory.

The data in this research was analyzed after transcribing the interviews and identifying the potential themes and codes found in them.

Pilot research on the topic (2019)

In preparation for this study I previously developed a pilot study about the history and legacy of Chavón La Escuela de Diseño. This pilot research consisted in the recruitment of three participants that could provide insights about Chavón by sharing their accounts as members of the school's community. The participants were selected in order to provide various points of view on their learning experience at the school. They included two graduates and the Rector of the school, who played a major role in designing the school's academic program and learning philosophy. In total, the participants consisted of one woman and two men with different backgrounds and experiences within the school.

Two different sets of questions were designed for the interviews: the first was prepared for the Rector of the school and included questions related to the history of the school and its pedagogical influences. The second set was directed to the graduates of the school and included questions related to their learning experiences, emphasizing the studio structure and the sense of community of the courses at the school.

For this pilot research study, the questions that were provided to the participants were designed with an open-ended approach to allow the interview to be as conversational as possible. The research questions and the proposed theory were developed according to the findings of the data provided. The responses were categorized into codes and themes according to how the participants defined the learning experience at Chavón.

Table of participants

Stephen Kaplan, interviewed on March 27th, 2019

Stephen Kaplan, former artist and educator, is the rector of Chavón. After leading the school since its origin in 1987 and developing its educational program, he now contributes to the development of the academic program while living abroad in the United States.

Emil Rivera, interviewed on April 9, 2019

Emil is a full time graphic designer and photographer. He graduated from Chavón in 2007 in the Communication Design program and in 2008 from the Digital Design program. Since then, Emil has been working in the field of graphic design and advertisement in New York City.

Lia Sued, interviewed on March 26, 2019

Lia graduated from Chavón in 2017 in the Communication Design program and completed her Bachelor's degree in Illustration at Parsons School of Design. She is now a full time illustrator residing in the Dominican Republic.

Elias Roedán, interviewed on September 13, 2020

**participant added to the second part of this study*

Elias was part of the first Fine Arts graduating class at Chavón. After directing and teaching in the Illustration and Communication Design department for more than 10 years, he is now working in Chavón as the academic coordinator.

Dominique Bluhdorn, interviewed on October 11, 2020

**participant added to the second part of this study*

Dominique is the President of the Altos de Chavón Foundation and an active member of the school. Since its beginnings, Dominique has led the school focusing on developing the arts and culture education in the Dominican Republic.

Mario Davalos, interviewed on December 10, 2020

**participant added to the second part of this study*

Mario is a graduate from the Chavón Fine Arts program in 1997. He is now a professional in the advertisement and photography industry in the Dominican Republic.

Figure 4: Table of participants

Pilot research study participants

The first participant interviewed for the pilot research was the rector of the school. Kaplan, this is how most students and teachers call him, is a former artist and educator. Kaplan gave relevant information about the pedagogical philosophy of the school and the different sources of inspiration that came from educational philosophers. He also explained how Chavón has additionally been influenced by several art and design schools curriculums, including that of Parsons School of Design with whom Chavón has been affiliated since its beginnings.

Lia, the second participant, graduated from Chavón in 2017 in the Communication Design program and was interviewed prior to completing her Bachelor's degree in Illustration at Parsons School of Design, as one of the Parsons scholarship students. Lia provided useful information that highlighted key aspects of the Chavón's learning program. Her participation allowed for a comparison of the learning experiences between these two affiliated schools.

Emil, the third participant of the pilot research, graduated from Chavón in 2007 in the Communication Design program and in 2008 from the Digital Design program. Since then, Emil has been working in the field of graphic design and advertisement in New York City. He provided insights on how Chavón prepared him for the workplace.

Addition of participants

To follow up on this initial research and to develop a more complete understanding of the school and its history, On September 2020, I conducted additional interviews with new participants. These three participants provided new information that shed light on the current challenges faced by the school and the school's plans for its future. Following the method used on the pilot research study, the questions that were posed to these new participants were designed with an open-ended approach, allowing the interviews to unfold as conversations. The responses were then categorized into codes and themes according the participants' accounts.

The first participant for the second part of this study is Dominique, the President of the Altos de Chavón Foundation. This is the Foundation that provides financial and other support to Chavón La Escuela de Diseño. Dominique provided insights on how the school has changed since its beginnings and the efforts being made to make it sustainable.

The second participant is Elias, an active member of the Chavón community, who over the years has been in and out of the school, assuming different roles as student, teacher and program director. Elias is now at Chavón working for the school as academic coordinator. In his interviews, he gives important information about the changes made in the program of the school and the importance of understanding today's generation of students.

The third participant is Mario, a graduate of the school and a professional in the advertisement industry in the Dominican Republic that has contributed to the Chavón community over the years.

These three new participants reflected on the relevance of the school since it began in 1983. However, when describing the original concept of the school and comparing it to today's reality, all three participants agreed that there is an urgent need for the school to update its program and adapt to current realities.

CHAPTER 4 - RESULTS

In this chapter, I present the pilot research's findings concerning the learning philosophy of Chavón La Escuela de Diseño, including specific findings that allow us to get an impression of the school's pedagogy and the structure of its studio program. Over several years, the school's curriculum has focused on the acquisition of basic skills through an intensive learning program. Participation in the program results in a strong sense of community among teachers and students. Strengths of the program include well implemented studio art critiques, small group classes, strong teacher-student relationships and a balance between technical and fine arts approaches to the curriculum.

Following up, I present the new findings provided by the three participants added to this study. These three participants provided new evidence that enlighten us on the current challenges faced by the school and the school's plans for its future.

Finally, I elaborate upon one specific major finding: the school's recent redefinition. This finding was brought up by all three new participants who expressed their vision and concerns about the future of the school considering the major transformations the school has been through since it was first founded: the closure of its original campus in La Romana, the change in society and education, the evolution of the art and design industry and lastly, the impact upon education of the global pandemic COVID-19 (2019-2022).

Chavón's educational philosophy

Kaplan, the Rector of Chavón, comes from the public schools of Brooklyn, New York where he studied in the 1940's and 1950's. He's been directing the school since its inception in 1983. By learning about his background, it is easy to understand how he has influenced and shaped the strong sense of community present in the school by integrating and supporting students from various socio-economic backgrounds.

I graduated from the Brooklyn College branch of City University with a BA in 1963. I majored in Fine Arts, and minored in Education. Then I did graduate work in School Psychology, also at Brooklyn. I earned an MA in Supervision and Administration of Art Institutions from The Bank Street and Parsons University program in 1980. I taught art in the secondary public schools of Brownsville, Brooklyn, a neighborhood that was economically depressed and in transition from middle class whites to Latin and African-Caribbean families. I served as a teacher of ESL (English as a second language) in addition to my work as a teacher of art. Later, I became a teacher trainer and program developer in the areas of drug abuse prevention, adult education, and worked as a counselor for training teachers on helping new immigrant students adapt. The district was Brooklyn's District 18. I was with them for 16 years.

Kaplan also provided relevant information about the pedagogical philosophy of the school and its different inspirations ranging from educational philosophers to different art and design schools, including the curriculum of the Parsons School of Design.

The pedagogical philosophy of Chavón is boiler-plated, in large degree, from that of Parsons School of Design together with our belief that education should be experiential and joyful. We believe that artists and designers are message carriers and problem solvers. We consider that all teaching and learning environments are best when interactive. And that in the arts, basic skill building engenders the kind of student confidence that enables the students to be more

inventive at all other stages of their development. This led to another relevant finding of the learning program in Chavón La Escuela de Diseño: the teaching of skills in the foundation year.



Figure 5: Rector Stephen Kaplan giving his graduation ceremony commencement speech at Chavón La Romana, 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=2715216258505221&set=a.271520177850666>

Acquisition of skills during the Foundation year

Reflecting on the school's philosophy, Kaplan explained that, over the many years of the school's existence, one tenet of the teaching philosophy was maintained: the first years of studies at Chavón are devoted to basic skills acquisition.

As time changes, attitudes change and art and art schools tend to change to be in step with the norms of the era. So as *expression* began to dominate the world of fine art, then other tendencies like *minimalism* and *conceptualism*, the school of art turned away from drawing, painting, sculpting, all from observation. We cling to the notion that skilled artists, ones who render what they observe, morph into more astute and self-assured professionals. That Chavón's basic year of intensive drawing, studies of composition, color, visual literacy, coupled with contextualization—that is, study of the principles of art and design history, the psychology of visual problem-solving and the acquisition skills of working alone, as a self-starter, and under the guidance of an instructor, and/or in groups and on group projects—produce the successful design professionals and fine artists (the term seems so antiquated) for which the school has become known.

Lia, Chavón graduate, provided a comparison between the skills level of Chavón students and Parsons students.

Comparing myself to most of the students I've encountered at Parsons, I feel like Chavón students often have the upper hand in many aspects. Most students at Parsons don't have half the experience we do in hands-on skills unless they actually took separate (not required) classes to learn them. They also don't receive very in-depth training on basic design softwares like Photoshop and Illustrator and, many times, the teachers don't even seem to be trained in these either.



Figure 6: First year students working on their foundation year color theory final project, 2002. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1299059390120922&set=oa.481400575388900>



Figure 7: Professor Raúl Miyar with Foundation Year Drawing students, 2002. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/chavonedu/photos/a.142342025163/10165851692740164>



Figure 8: Students sleeping on the computer lab after lengthy hours of work, 2008. Photography courtesy of Emil Rivera.

Emil, the second Chavón graduate in the pilot study, also shared his analysis of the program emphasizing on skill acquisition.

As a professional I am very grateful for what I took from Chavón, the can-do, anything goes approach to problem solving is the greatest thing I've learned in life, that paired with the second nature knowledge of how to execute creative pieces.

An intensive learning program

The Rector expressed how the school believes that creativity comes to fruition when there is stress and discomfort. This idea can be seen in the intensive curriculum that the school offers, described by graduates as a “very intense” program.

Lia expanded on this fact:

It was very intense work and often times I really hated it, but I feel like if it hadn't been so hard I wouldn't have learned everything I did. Chavón was very work-heavy both at school and at home, which meant everyone was usually sleep-deprived. Facilities were limited at the new campus in Santo Domingo but we made the best of it. There was a strong sense of community between the students, students and teachers, even with administrative staff. Days were long in my case, having 12 hour days at school a couple of times a week.

Emil, expressed gratitude towards a learning experience that was challenging and rewarding at the same time.

The experience was challenging, in the sense that every day was a learning experience in one way or another, without time to fully digest what was happening, yet all of this was extremely rewarding looking back. My instructors were/are some of the most wonderful and human teachers I've ever had. Some of it was tough love, in the best possible way.



Figure 9: Chavón Santo Domingo students working after hours on group project, 2015. Photography courtesy of Lia Sued.

Role of the teacher

Other relevant findings provided by Lia allows us to identify a key component of the Chavón program by highlighting the dedication teachers put into their work.

Teachers at Chavón made more of an effort to get to know their students and their work, and it actually felt like they were trying to bring out the best in each of us. At Parsons, the teachers feel a lot more detached (with a few exceptions), their critiques often feel superficial compared to those I would receive at Chavón.



Figure 10: Fine Arts students Printing Workshop with Professor Ezequiel Taveras, 2010. Image courtesy of Raúl Miyar.



Figure 11: Professor Victor González with Graphic Design students, 1997. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/chavonedu/photos/a.142342025163/10157368056665164>



Figure 12: Extensive critique session with Professor Elias Roedán and Graphic Design students, 2011. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10158575122810173&set=t.510340172&type=3>

Studio critiques in studio art education

Critiques are a key component of the Chavón program. It is a skill that is developed in every student in every course, with the objective of creating a community of critical thinkers. Concerning the use of critiques as an activity in the studio program, Lia spoke about its importance in community building.

What I missed the most from the Chavón experience while at Parsons was having the teachers and other students be actually involved in my work. Most of my work critiques at Parsons have been one-on-one with teachers, and I feel like I've only gotten two honest critiques from them in the two years I've attended Parsons. Not seeing other students' work and having them not see mine until the last weeks of the semester really brings the whole learning experience down and also makes it harder to make friends.

These findings give us the impression that Chavón's learning philosophy, with its mixture of traditional and contemporary pedagogical methods develops skilled artists and designers. This fact is emphasized by the participants when they talk about the strong sense of community and discipline that, in turn, result in a valuable learning experience, preparing its students in the key aspects of higher education identified by Budge (2012): employability, efficiency and creativity.



Figure 13: Illustration professor Jonathan Schmidt with Illustration student on individual critique session . 2016. Photography courtesy of Lia Sued.

Chavón: the early years and now

The three new participants provided an overview of the early days of the school and provided an understanding on why the school needs to reinvent its program according to the present demands of the art and design industry and the needs of a new generation of students.

Eliás, academic coordinator at Chavón, talked about the school's success in its early years, explaining how the context assured student success.

What Chavón represented for many years, because of its isolated location and architectural structure in La Romana, was stones and seclusion, so the strength was definitely there. The student was placing himself or herself in an isolated space, and at the same time that the student was learning about design, the student was maturing as a human being. No matter the social background of the student or the quality of the teacher, since the student was always going through a growing process, on a personal and professional level simultaneously, there were many things the student could accomplish because the context provoked it. With one good structured teacher, in a secluded space and surrounded by nature and art, success was assured in a certain way for the student.



Figure 14: Some of the class of 1990 in their graduation day, 1990. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=18893277395&set=pb.646072395.-2207520000..&type=3>

Mario, Chavón graduate and advertisement professional, reflected on the advantage Chavón had against other art and design schools when it first originated.

When I got in Chavón in 1997, nobody had e-mails, there was no internet and students were really isolated from all of these things. Chavón had the advantage against other art and design schools, having an information access that no other art and design school in the country had.

We had a fantastic library plus highly qualified and knowledgeable teachers. That knowledge that concentrated there, started to slowly level as the rest of art and designs school gained access to the internet. Chavón lost its competitiveness because the information access of other art and design schools somehow was balanced. I believe that's when Chavón started to lose that competitive advantage towards other schools and found itself looking for another direction. I believe we are still there, looking for a new direction.



Figure 15: Mario and classmates in their Fine Arts sculpture class, 1999. Photography courtesy of Pedro Carrasco.

As an experienced member of the advertising industry in the Dominican Republic, Mario expands on the reputation of Chavón in the workplace and how it has changed over the years:

In the workplace, the best of the designers came from Chavón during many years. In the years 2006 and 2007 there was still that noticeable difference in the workplace between students that came from Chavón and other schools. I believe that has changed now. The school has had the same teaching model since the 80's and the 90's and it is time to change it.

In the previous findings revealed in the pilot research, graduates provided insights on the success of the structure and elements of the program implemented at the original campus at La Romana. But as times change, the school has suffered numerous economic impacts, thereby needing to change the academic program in order to bring in more students. The school has been through an ongoing process of reinvention that eventually led to the closing at La Romana and the move to the capital of Santo Domingo.



Figure 16: Altos de Chavón villa. Retrieved from <https://www.godomini-canrepublic.com/es/poi/teatros/la-romana-es/altos-de-chavon-amphitheater/>

From the village of La Romana to the city of Santo Domingo

Students and staff from previous generations of the Chavón community tend to look at Chavón with nostalgia, often showing resistance to any changes made by the school whether a change of department directors, the hiring of new teachers or modifications to the original program of study, such as reducing the number of hours devoted to drawing courses. This resistance became even stronger when the school announced its decision to close the original campus at La Romana in order to offer its programs in Santo Domingo.

Dominique explained the main reason for the closure of the campus in La Romana is that it is no longer sustainable.

In the beginning it was hard. Taking so much money to invest in this kind of idea, when we were building Chavón, was hard for a lot of people to understand. My father built this village in 1974 as a contribution to the enrichment of the Dominican culture. To develop this village that my father built and felt was important to do, and more than the village, it was really the kind of cultural work and the impact that it would have on people. Which is why I really believe there's a moment in which the work goes on and it's not really the place that defines the work, it is the work that defines the place.

Dominique continues.

I'm always very critical with Chavón. Closing our campus in La Romana was a decision that had to be made. With the original Chavón changing, it became more complicated to have a density of students that would sustain it. We decided to go to Santo Domingo in the first place because little by little we understood that this wasn't working. It's not sustainable. It becomes harder and harder to bring in students.



Figure 17: Foundation year students presenting their Drawing Course final project at Chavón Santo Domingo 2015. Photography courtesy of Lia Sued.

When speaking about the closure of the original campus, Mario provided relevant insights about the role of Chavón in society and the importance of its change.

We have to understand that the world changes and art does not exist in a void, art exists with the community. If community and society change, the role of art and the school have to change too. So I believe Chavón made the right decision in moving into Santo Domingo. Chavón has to be connected to society, because design solves problems and Chavón is not only an art school, it is a design school and a design school has to engage with society.

Mario also addressed needed changes in the organizational structure of the school.

If we compare other schools in other parts of the world, there are schools that have such a high impact on its society, that when they say something, the community respects it. That is what needs to be done here in terms of culture and that is what I think we have to insert again in the identity of the school. There are things that need to be adapted, changed and updated, even in the organizational structure of the school, it has to start from the inside.

Expanding on his comments on the changes that need to be made in the school, Mario talked about turning the school into a private institution and mentioned how the school is not accredited by the Dominican Ministry of Higher Education.

The school has to look for different sources of revenue. But it's hard because of the nature of the school, being a non profit organization. I believe the school has to become a private institution. It has to create a board with fiscal sponsorship in order to receive higher donations. It has to get accredited by the Dominican Ministry of Higher Education in order to have access to all the students that are not supported by their parents in the idea of studying in Chavón.

Redefining Chavón

Data in this study revealed that participants supported the idea of a redefinition of the school. The school gradually started to make changes to its programs by having the programs of Fine Arts and Film remain in La Romana, and the programs Fashion and Communication Design relocated to Santo Domingo, since these two programs had less enrollments every year while at the campus of La Romana. The global pandemic of Covid-19 that started in early 2020 economically affected the operations of the school and it was then that the school formalized the closure of the campus at La Romana. With the closure of the campus at La Romana and the relaunching of the programs in Santo Domingo in a completely new context, the school is currently going through an internal redefinition.

Dominique spoke about this redefinition:

The pandemic moved us towards something we had to have done. We are now redefining our mission and what makes us unique. We believe that everything worth saving has to be reimagined for survival.

Dominique expressed how becoming financially sustainable is one major goal for the school.

The mission right now as we're moving forward is that the school is able to function in an on-going way. We believe adaptability and flexibility determine your ability to become sustainable. I think that kind of responsive skill building to whatever the environment needs, is an important part of what we do and we have to do it.

Changes in the curriculum

Dominique explained how this redefinition of the school's purpose has been impacted by the global pandemic, especially in the context of online education: a learning resource never implemented by the school before.

We went into virtual school within a week and we pulled it together with a high level of delivery from everyone, specially from the professors. We managed to get through the semester in a remarkable way.

Dominique talked about how online education represents a challenge and how the school has been implementing different ways to succeed at it.

This has helped us to understand that education moving forward has to have a much bigger component of online teaching. We are very interested in exploring this online space and how to make design and art curriculum much more vibrant and interesting to it. We are looking at the new needs, spaces, what are we teaching for. We are fixing the bike as we go along.

She also mentions how the school is making an effort to maintain its sense of community while implementing an online education program.

A lot of people are very worried that the community that is built in Chavón will go away, and I think it won't because we're obsessed with it. It has been a challenge. We have made an effort to provide students with activities to get involved: lectures, seminars, meetings with the faculty and workshops. It was a way for them to know that they go to a place that is preoccupied in what happens to them. We want to get them started with their work but we also want to make them feel like they're part of a bigger community.

Elias, Chavón's current academic coordinator, expands on the school's experience implementing online education.

As we are rethinking our program, we understand that we have to deliver the content but in a different way. We can't address the students in the same way, we need to use different methodologies from the ones we used before. We are facing a translation of campuses from La Romana to Santo Domingo and also, a translation of content from physical to virtual.

The pandemic forced us to start the summer semester virtually. Through this process we learned that online teaching pressures the teachers to better structure their courses, we believe this is one of the reasons why we obtained great results from the students in this first online semester.

Elias talked about the challenges of virtual education and explains how experiencing these changes are part of the role of a designer.

Our big challenge now is to find ways to involve and motivate the student without losing rigor and discipline. So I've been constantly reminding teachers that we have to help students understand that we have designed a program in which they will learn the content they need to learn, even if it's virtually. Our standards will not lower because the courses are virtual now. I told my students that a designer is a person who solves problems in a defined context, with requirements and limitations, and that this would be our first design project; them being good virtual students and us being good virtual teachers.

Elias further expressed how the new program is focused on creating a strong sense of structure and why this is important.

What I'm doing now is working on the school's curriculum, building it little by little so there is a structure to follow. We are making strong adjustments and rethinking the content of the courses. The teaching style in Chavón a lot of times was to give an assignment and students had to figure out how to do it themselves. Now it's different. There has to be a coherence in the program, each assignment should be connected to the other. Each assignment should be a continuation from what was given in class. When there is no requirement, students feel lost. The results are better when there is a structure because structure allows connectivity. Now we're making an effort to keep the objectives clear and simple.

Elias talked about the two campuses and how the goal right now is the creation of a context for the students that provides a sense of cooperation, adaptation and excellence.

When I started working again for the School in Santo Domingo, I went to take a look at what was happening in the two different campuses. In Santo Domingo, the context isn't the same as in La Romana, where the environment helped students excel. I wanted to analyze what we could replicate from La Romana in Santo Domingo, without having to create dorms for the students, without the lengthy hour courses, without the intensity of the teachers and understanding that the world has changed completely from when the school originated in 1983. I realized that we don't have to replicate our old campus. We have to readjust to this new reality. Now we are creating that context so that we obtain the sense of brotherhood, the sense of compromise, and the search for excellence that characterize us. We felt the need to structure better our program according to today's students and that's why we are focused now on structure.

Changes in the first year program

Elias gave insights on the structure of the first year of study in the school's program and explained how the changes have been made according to the needs of today's students and demands of the art and design industries.

The program has been changing for some years now. Since the beginning of the school, it has been structured into a two year program. The first year program or foundation year, was created behind the idea that in art and design there are general concepts that need to be understood without direction to any discipline. Now the foundation year program is still perceived as a solid fundamental base, but it is a much fluid transition for students. Before students had a foundation year and then they went to their second year in their area of focus.

Elias also gave insights on how the first year of the program was highly focused on representational drawing and explains how the program is now more design oriented.

This first year of the program was highly focused on representational drawing courses, created mainly for the Fine Arts program. It consisted in six to eight hour drawing courses. We changed the foundation year and now it provides a global vision of design, focused more on thinking and conceptualization. It is more design oriented, focused more on critical thinking, problem solving and conceptualization, without putting execution aside.

Elias also explained how the drawing courses have been shifting from realistic drawing to the principals of drawing, making them more oriented to the students interests.

The idea of the representational drawing has been slowly drifting and it hasn't been an easy shift. We don't want to downplay the importance of drawing because it will always be a valuable tool but we understood we needed to make changes according to the demands of today. In this new drawing program, representation is not the main focus, the main focus now is the translation of the student. So our courses now, including the drawing course, are more conceptual and abstract. In their drawing class, photography students explore light and shadow and color, no matter if it's in an abstract form.

Elias clarifies further.

Drawings are now concentrated on the principles of drawing, more than focusing on the beauty of the drawing or developing realistic drawing skills. The drawing courses are now designed so students focus more on aspects like composition and light. We are making a shift from realistic drawing to credibility.

When talking about the school's responsiveness to the work environment, Dominique talks about the Fine Arts program and Fashion program and how each program has been modified and updated according to the needs of the students.

The Fine Arts program has been a battle. It's a great program but at a certain point you have to take a great program and say: it could be greater. Bringing in new teachers, bringing new energy and new thinking around the whole major. Maybe it's going to lose something in the process, but it's going to gain more because it's a different world that we're in right now. The students have to be trained in more than having great drawing skills, we have to give them other kinds of skills to move forward.

In the Fashion Program we have a big goal right now. We are clear that it isn't really about designing runway collections for people who are going to glamorous dinner parties: that idea

is over. We are now focusing on these students getting a job, not necessarily designing fabulous bridal collections. We are now questioning what is the social implication in Fashion, what students are doing with this information and how are we training people to be able to work in a completely different way. We have to give students skills to function in this changing world.

On the same subject, Mario, the participant who is an experienced advertisement professional, described the skills a fine artist should have nowadays.

By definition every artist is an entrepreneur and there are entrepreneurship qualities that are not being taught to these artists: how to speak in public, how to present a proposal, how to put their ideas in words, how to calculate the price of their work, how to get inserted in the art work market and that's why there are so many talented graduates that don't know what to do after they finish school.



Figure 18: Fashion Design students work: Gala collection with low budget fabrics, 2007. Retrieved from: <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=7806129051&set=a.7804799051>

The essence of Chavón is not a formula

The findings of the pilot research study might give the false impression that the components of Chavón's education philosophy could be described or identified as a formula. As the interview with Elias unfolded, it was clearly explained how the essence of Chavón is not a formula but a constant reinvention.

When asked to define Chavón's formula, Elias energetically explains how the essence of the Chavón's educational approach doesn't rely on a formula all the while emphasizing that over time Chavón has been through constant changes.

For Chavón, every now and then there has been reinvention. Chavón has always been very organic, changing every year with the professors, with the students, changing strategies according to what everyone brought in. The essence and philosophy of Chavón is not a formula. It may seem like there is a formula behind it but it really is something that goes from within, it's very profound and abstract that has nothing to do with La Romana's stone buildings or seclusion.

Elias emphasizes the point of view of a designer as a problem solver who shouldn't follow formulas but has to be a critical thinker instead.

I've always been against formulas, formulas aren't the way. In order for us to maintain our essence we have to understand that as the world changes, systems change, and we can't go on with formulas. We are creating problem solvers and we have to teach them how to solve them, without a formula, considering the context, establishing clear goals, establishing a defined planning and a solid structure.

To conclude, Elias defines the essence of Chavón with a smile and talks about brotherhood and excellence.

So I believe Chavón's essence relies in the compromise, the infatuation, the passion, understanding that what you are learning is not a formula but a way of life, a way of looking at the world, a way of being and a way of having your voice. It is about brotherhood, collaboration, comprehension, connection and the sense of belonging, the fact that you know you belong to something that is way much bigger than just you.

In this chapter, the data provided allowed us to have an understanding of Chavón's learning philosophy through the accounts of different members of its community. The findings presented in this chapter reveal that there is a strong sense of community and a rigorous discipline within the academic program that, combined with traditional and contemporary methods, create a valuable learning experience for the students.

The interviews revealed how Chavón's evolution has always been very organic and how the school has continuously redefined its program over the years by making curricular adjustments and trying to adapt to the new demands and needs of students.

Now, as the school closed its original campus in 2021 and is going through its first years of operations exclusively in the city of Santo Domingo, Chavón is redefining its mission and its program. The school strongly believes that in order to ensure its survival, it needs to be reimagined and transformed.

In the next chapter, in order to provide new understandings and insights about the history and legacy of Chavón La Escuela de Diseño, I will discuss the significance of the previously presented findings. I will compare the findings revealed in the pilot research with the findings that arose from the interviews with the three new participants in this study. This comparison will focus on the structure and elements of the studio class culture at Chavón, and I will discuss the findings that were revealed by the three new participants in the study. I will also discuss the changes implemented in the program of study as a result of the school's reinvention.

CHAPTER 5 - ANALYSIS

In this chapter, I discuss the data that emerged from the two groups of interviews conducted with the research participants. These interviews consisted of open ended questions where graduates, students, faculty and administrators associated with Chavón La Escuela de Diseño shared their personal experiences and provided information on the school's history, development and legacy in the Dominican Republic.

This chapter begins with data that informs us on the common points shared by most of the participants interviewed for this study. These are the following aspects of the school: the studio course culture with an emphasis on the critique sessions, the strong sense of community among students and teachers, the role of the teacher, the intense academic program, the shift from an art school to a design school and lastly, the present need to redefine the school's educational program.

Later, I focus on the points where participants disagree in relation to the current changes that the program is going through: the value of a foundation skill acquisition year and the level of employability among graduates.

Finally, I focus on the data provided by the second group of interview questions which addresses the closure of the original Chavón campus and the challenges faced by the school in the near future.

Studio course culture

As shown in the previous chapter, participants talked about the studio course culture that shapes the Chavón educational program, highlighting the first year of skill acquisition and the critique sessions. I will expand more on the topic of first year skill acquisition further on when I discuss the changes that are being made in the school's academic program.

As mentioned in the literature review chapter of this study, the essence of studio based teaching and learning includes creative and reflective thinking and a focus on learning through action, putting in place an investigative and creative process driven by research, exploration and experimentation, as well as critique and reflection. In the following paragraphs there is evidence on how the Chavón's educational program includes the four essential dimensions of art and design studios proposed by Zehner (2009): a culture of people (students and teachers) who build a creative community; a mode of teaching and learning characterized by processes of critical reflection; small class sizes and periods of individual face-to-face contact with teachers; a program of projects and activities that reflect and integrate professional practice; and a physical space or constructed environment including a teaching and workshop space, tools and equipment and technical assistance appropriate to project needs.

The first relevant finding in regards to studio culture that arose from these interviews, is how members of the Chavón community value the critique culture that forms part of the educational program.

Studio course culture: critiques

Barrett (2000) writes that studio critiques are essential to college art courses and defines them as dialogues between instructors and students that engage the different perspectives of the instructor, the student whose art is being critiqued, and the student artist's peers.



Figure 19: Fine Arts student working on his thesis project, 2019. Photography courtesy of Raúl Miyar.



Figure 20: Fine Arts student on critique session, 2016. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1000441486684126&set=t.541401448&type=3>

Participants in this study spoke about the culture of studio critiques present at Chavón. They expressed how critiques create a strong sense of community among the students and serve as a tool for self assessment in their professional lives. Elias, the academic coordinator, expressed how Chavón had earned a reputation for its extensive and dedicated group and individual critiques.



Figure 21: Fashion Design critique session with students and professors Natasha Serrata and Maritza Soto, 2004. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1299150336778494&set=oa.481400575388900>

Barrett (2000) reports that the two most common complaints of students about their experiences of critiques are having been embarrassed in front of their classmates by instructors and leaving critiques discouraged rather than motivated to make more art.

Barrett (2000) also states that in situations where instructors were trying to mentor students rather than criticize them, students would likely respond more positively to and engage more readily in critical discussions of their work. Thereby assuming less defensive postures when their work was being discussed. (p. 34, 35)

On this subject, Elias expressed how critiques produce positive results when they are honest, well intended and objective, leaving little room for subjectivity. This allows us to understand why the critique sessions at Chavón are so valuable for the students.

He explains:

A big challenge for us now is making students listen and accept the aspects of their work they can improve on. This requires true professors whose words come from good. Professors that are honest and have that vision, even if they say it in a harsh way it should always come with good intentions. Every time I talk to my students about getting offended during the critique sessions, they express being tired of this mentality. This mentality is a theory and a pose. In the real world we still have competitiveness and we have to prepare students to be able to survive in a competitive world.

I talk to my students a lot about what is objective and what is subjective. I try to be as objective as possible when it comes to assessing their work so that whatever is subjective about their work, does not interfere with the assessment. I tell them they should not work for the grades but they should keep in mind that grades and assessments are a reflection of their effort, not about themselves or their talent, but about their behavior during a phase.

Several participants in my research expressed how the critiques sessions in Chavón, represented a big part of their learning experience and that they wish they had the same level of feedback from their peers in their ongoing professional careers.

Sense of community among students and teachers

In terms of the learning experience at Chavón, participants spoke about the strong sense of community that exists among students, teachers and the administrative staff. McMillan (1976) states that the idea of community represents a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to being together. (p. 9)

All participants in this research spoke about the sense of community as they talked about their experiences within the school and demonstrated how the majority of graduates, students, faculty and administrators continue to support the school through out the years. Elias expressed that: “We all come back in one way or another to give back what we received. There is a web in Chavón, formed by a team of ex-alumni who stick together.”



Figure 22: Faculty formed by graduates of Chavón, 2016. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10100386899986467&set=pb.34605061.-2207520000..&type=3>

McMillan (1976) expands on the definition of community, categorizing it into four elements. The first element is membership: the feeling of belonging or of sharing a sense of personal relatedness. The second element is influence: a sense of making a difference to a group and of the group mattering to its members. The third element is reinforcement: the feeling that members' needs will be met by the resources received through their membership in the group. The last element is shared emotional connection, the commitment and belief that members have shared and will share history, common places, time together, and similar experiences. (p. 9)

Supporting this theory, Elias expands:

I believe that what brings chavoneros together is the fact that we all lived a very intense experience, real, transformative on levels that design was just the tip of the iceberg. The transformation that is given in Chavón is inside. Everyone finds their own voice.

As participants spoke about the strong sense of community in the school and the opening of a new campus with online courses and no dorms for the students, it became necessary to address how the school would continue to develop this sense of community among its students without the previous physical proximity of the students and teachers.

According to Elias:

One of the fundamental aspects of Chavón is the integration between students. In La Romana, this was given by default because all students lived together in the dorms. One of the things I noticed when I started working in Santo Domingo is that students didn't know each other, other than the classmates in their courses. As we're making efforts to replicate the essence of Chavón, we want to make students integrate with each other. We understood we had to make it possible to at least have the classes during the same schedule, and somehow give students their break time at the same time, so they start integrating with each other.



Figure 23: Student Residency at Chavón La Romana early morning while students were working in their dorms, 2008. Photography courtesy of Emil Rivera.

The building architecture at Chavón La Romana also reflected its studio course culture.

Students worked in hexagonal shaped classrooms with big open windows located all next to one another. This physical structure encouraged students to walk around the classrooms and look at everyone's work displayed on the walls. In these spaces, students could work intensively and discuss their projects and assignments, all under the guidance of an artist-teacher.



Figure 24: Professor Angelo Valenzuela with Foundation year students, 2011. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/chavonedu/photos/a.10150788137240164/10150788288300164>



Figure 25: Fine Arts students after class overlooking the Chavón River, 2012. Photography courtesy of Raúl Miyar.



Figure 26: Students playing volleyball outside dorms. Photography courtesy of Emil Rivera.



Figure 27: Professor Angelo Valenzuela preparing dinner for students, 2016. Photography courtesy of Lia Sued.

Role of the teacher

As participants talked about the strong sense of community present at the school, a related finding was the role of the teacher in shaping this sense among the students. Participants expressed how teachers at Chavón are dedicated to their students by getting to know them and their work and trying to bring out the best in them.

Elias spoke about the role of the teacher in the classroom, establishing the difference between the teacher's role at Chavón in its early days and the teacher's role now in the present. Chavón has always expressed that our faculty is formed by professionals in the art and design industry who will prepare students to insert themselves successfully in the field. But because we hire professional artists and not educators, the school sometimes lacks structure in the curriculum and teachers sometimes lack empathy towards the students.



Figure 28: Artist and sculpture professor Mark Lineweaver, 1999. Photography courtesy of Pedro Carrasco.

Continuing on the role of the teacher, Elias expressed how nowadays there has to exist a sense of teamwork between the students and teachers.

We still have teachers who believe that education is a constant argument between the professor and the student and we are trying to change this perception. We want to help teachers understand that teaching now doesn't position the students in a lower level than the teacher. Now it is different, it has to be a teamwork. We need to understand that students are here to learn, and to not understand things immediately. We are creating problem solvers. We give them all of our knowledge for them to readjust it in any way they want.

He later explained that teachers need to maintain a balance between authority and humbleness.

Teachers now have to be humble, knowing that they possess knowledge that is beneficial for the students, but also recognizing that the students possess knowledge that is beneficial for the teachers too. It becomes a reciprocate process without loosing the direction and authority of the professor.

He spoke about himself as a teacher, showing passion towards his teaching experience.

Teaching is my true vocation. I feel passion and love when I'm painting and illustrating. Design comes completely naturally to me. But what I feel when I enter a classroom, I don't feel it with anything else. I have a passion for the classroom. The discussions and the learning that happen in a classroom. There is a great power in what teaching generates in me, I can be tired

or sad and teaching never feels like a drag, like painting, designing and illustrating do. Now I try to make my classes joyful.



Figure 29: Professor Elias Roedán during a critique sessions with Graphic Design Students, 2004. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10150332078086154&set=t.510340172&type=3>

Intense academic program

Participants spoke about the intense academic program that characterizes Chavón, resulting in lengthy hour courses and work-heavy projects both at school and at home. The rector expressed how the school believes in creativity coming to fruition when there is some stress and discomfort.

In a study about intensive learning programs, Scott (2003) found that students in intensive learning programs reported an increase in their focus, stamina and retention with a decrease in their procrastinating behavior. The study also revealed how, because of the accelerated format, the faculty incorporated more interaction, discussion and other constructive teaching methods, thereby, improving student motivation.

In regard to Chavón, the importance of student motivation is palpable as graduate participants proudly speak about the challenging experiences they experienced in their programs of study and express gratitude towards it.

Foundation skill acquisition year and the shift from art school to design school

An important topic that arose in these interviews is related the foundation skill acquisition year and how it has been an important part of the academic program for the past several years. As the program is changing, the focus is shifting from drawing to design.

Kaplan, the rector at Chavón, explained how the foundation year consisting go intense drawing produced the successful art and design professionals that the school is known for. In contrast, Elias the academic coordinator, explained how the foundation year was evolving into a different concept where the foundation year program still exists as a solid fundamental base, but that it is now a much fluid transition for students.

Participants mentioned that in the teaching approach favored by Chavón, teachers gave an assignment and students had to figure it out by themselves. Elias expressed how there is now an effort to change this, making the program a more coherent one. He also explained how there is an attempt to shift the focus from representational drawing to design thinking thus giving students more than just great drawing skills, but also the skills to move forward.

Elias provided information on specific changes in the foundation year program. He explained that the program now provides a global vision of design, focused more on thinking and conceptualization. It is more design oriented, focused more on critical thinking, problem solving and conceptualization, without putting execution aside. Participants expressed how these changes are due to the focus on students finding employment and on the social implication of their work.

Participants agreed that Chavón is a design school and that students, as designers, are problem solvers. This finding allows us to understand the changes made to the first year of the program. Since the founding of the school, the first year program was highly focused on representational drawing and now it is shifting towards a design oriented focus.

Graduates employability

Participants spoke about the level of employability among Chavón graduates. Some participants expressed that the school is not preparing its students with the skills they need to be in their professionalization as artists and designers, including practical and intellectual skills such as how to present a proposal, how to calculate the price of their work and how to talk about their work.

An interesting finding within this subject was brought up by Elias when he spoke about the school's graduates and their level success in the professional field. Elias expressed how not every single one of students who have studied in Chavón is a great artist or designer but generally speaking, the desire to do a good job, no matter how good or bad the student's work is, is present in all of them. Elias also spoke about the difficulty in the art education field in developing the emotional and artistic part of the students at the same time as they develop a sense of responsibility, coherence and articulated thinking.

He explained:

There are many factors that will influence in a students' success, more than just how fabulous their color application is. The complicated part of this profession is that students might think they are only learning how to draw but this is a profession in which you have to combine your intellectual, emotional and physical faculties.

Elias continued:

You don't go to art school to learn how to draw or paint, you go to art school to learn how to become a professional in the field. I tell my students when they are going to their second year of studies that now they can see the difference between an amateur and a professional. This doesn't mean that one is better than the other but a professional has qualities that go beyond a pretty drawing or a pretty design.

Challenges faced by Chavón

Finally, significant challenges faced by Chavón emerged in the interviews with my participants including the closure of the original Chavón campus, the program of Fine Arts and Film and the non-accreditation of the school by the Dominican Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology.

As shown in the previous chapter, older generations of the Chavón community tend to look at Chavón with nostalgia and were opposed to the closure of the original campus in La Romana. As the school is going through a period of redefinition, one of the challenges right now is related to the location of the two programs that remained at the La Romana campus after the opening of the school in the city of Santo Domingo.

After the school was impacted by the global pandemic of Covid-19, the programs that remained in La Romana campus; Film and Fine Arts, were also moved to Santo Domingo. Participants spoke of the difficulty in accommodating these two programs in a different urban campus that is not secluded and surrounded by majestic nature surroundings.

The second challenge faced by the school that arose from these interviews is the non accreditation of the school's programs by the Dominican Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology. Elias, the academic coordinator, explained how this non-accreditation came about because the Chavón program follows the structure of its affiliate school, Parsons School of Design. In order to be accredited by the Dominican Ministry of Higher Education, Chavón would have to change its 40 year old program structure in order to comply with the structure mandated by the Ministry.

Changes required by the Ministry include adding courses that are not presently incorporated in the Chavón program such as mathematics, Dominican history and literature. Adding these courses to the program would represent a much heavier academic load for students. It would also have budgetary ramifications such as hiring more teachers and the extension of a two-year program into a four-year program.

Another implication of accreditation would be the requirement for teachers to have graduate-level university degrees. In the majority of the cases, the teachers at Chavón are artists and designers who don't necessarily have a higher education degree, although there are many that do.

Elias expressed how over the years, the school has understood that this accreditation isn't in keeping with the objectives of the schools' programs. Elias mentioned the organic way in which the school has adapted its programs by adding courses according to students needs or demands. He explained that if the school came to be accredited by the Ministry of Higher Education, it would have to go through a long process in order to implement these changes in the program, thereby risking the loss of its essence and core values.

In this chapter we analyzed the data provided in the previous chapter. This analysis allowed writing the narrative history and legacy of Chavón by studying the oral accounts of students, teachers and community member of the school. These oral accounts provide an understanding on the aspects that define Chavón's educational program: a studio course program and its strong critique culture, the sense of community among students and teachers, the role of the teacher, the intense academic program, the foundation skill acquisition year, the shift from art to design school, the graduates employability and the challenges faced by the school in the present and in the near future.

In the final chapter I will present the conclusions of this study, focusing on the evolution path of Chavón as an art and designs school.

CHAPTER 6 - CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter I will provide the conclusions of this study by answering the four questions on which this research was centered. After answering each question, I will present a comparison between Chavón La Escuela de Diseño and other art and design schools, focusing on the patterns identified in their development in order to establish Chavón's current position in the evolution path of an art and design school.

The first question posed for this research was: What are the pedagogical components of post-secondary studio art education? In the following paragraph I summarize the pedagogical components of the post-secondary studio art education program at Chavón La Escuela de Diseño.

There is a general lack of literature on post-secondary studio art education programs. Only a few studies inform us about the pedagogical structures and components of such programs. This study contributes to this body of knowledge by identifying the pedagogical components of Chavón La Escuela de Diseño's program. These can be described as: small class sizes, lengthy periods of time devoted to studio work, an intensive academic program, a learning program that integrates professional practice with clear objectives, a culture based on informal peer exchanges as well do structured formal critique sessions, a strong sense of community among students and teachers, a mode of learning based on critical reflection and physical spaces that allow students to explore and interact with each other.

Now I will provide an answer to the second question posed for this research: What makes Chavón La Escuela de Diseño unique? After studying the different pedagogical components of post-secondary studio art education and after learning about other art and design schools, I questioned what is unique about Chavón. A common idea that prevails among graduates and members of the Chavón community is that what made the school unique was the isolation that the campus provided from urban distractions and the tropical garden surroundings of the original campus. But as was revealed in this study, the school still operated under the same pedagogical structure despite the change of its location to the densely populated city of Santo Domingo. So, I concluded that what makes Chavón unique is not an isolation from urban distractions, but its strong studio art pedagogical structure and the fact that learning also takes place through informal components that aren't normally considered part of the curriculum.

These learning components that are not transmitted through the curriculum can be identified as: 1) the strong sense of community and belonging that exists among teachers and students that result in lifelong bonds and life-changing experiences; 2) the constant state of evolution that the school goes through while trying to provide students the tools they need in order to succeed; 3) the hard work, commitment and excellence that is passed from one generation to another among students and teachers despite changes in faculty and student demographics.

The third research question posed for this study was: What do the oral accounts from graduates, students, faculty or administrators associated with the school tell us about the school's impact in the community over the last four decades? The oral accounts presented in this study explain how Chavón has contributed to the development of the art and design professions in the Dominican Republic by graduating more than 2,000 well-trained professionals since 1983, coupled with a strong record of job placements in the industry in the Dominican Republic. The participants in this study also revealed how throughout the years the community has been kept vigorous by the contributions of the school's alumni and teachers, who always come back to the school and give back to it in different ways, thus keeping the Chavón spirit alive.

These accounts also demonstrate how Chavón has been considered a pioneer in art and design education in the Dominican Republic for over four decades. The school has maintained a reputation of excellence and hard work over the years, establishing high standards in the art and design education field both locally and internationally. In spite of the school's non-accreditation by the Dominican Ministry of Higher Education, participants in this study explained that they preferred studying at Chavón rather than in other Dominican art and design schools accredited by the Dominican Ministry of Higher Education, because of the quality of its program and the school's favorable reputation. Participants in this study also expressed that after studying in Chavón and completing further studies abroad, they realized that the standards at Chavón were higher; as graduates of Chavón they felt more professionally prepared compared to students from other schools.

Furthermore, thanks to the school's affiliation with Parsons School of Design in New York, Chavón has created a bridge between Dominican and international artists and designers, allowing for an expansion of its community and its influence. This relationship has permitted numerous renowned international artists and designers to visit the Dominican Republic as visiting artists at Chavón thus propelling Dominican talent on an international level for over four decades.

The last question posed for this research was: How did the school create a legacy of artists and designers in the Dominican Republic? This study informs about how Chavón La Escuela de Diseño has created a legacy of artists and designers in the Dominican Republic by making significant contributions to the cultural life of the country.

These contributions can be identified as: 1) an advanced professional training program based on hard work and a commitment to excellence that allows graduates to achieve success in different fields as artists, designers and art educators; 2) the creation of a learning experience that is defined as life-changing by the students, created by a solid educational program and the development of a strong sense of community among students and teachers; 3) the integration of students that come from different parts of the country and different socioeconomic backgrounds, creating a rich diversity in the student population that is not evidenced in any other art and design school in the country. These contributions along with Chavón's ongoing evolution and redefinition are what constitute the legacy of a community of artists and designers in the Dominican Republic fostered by a school that stands apart from any other art and design school in the country.

In the course of this research, looking at different art and design schools made it possible to identify patterns in the evolution of their pedagogical structures. These patterns provide an understanding of this development and the challenges encountered by art and design schools. This provides a perspective on where Chavón stands at this point in its evolution, considering its recent challenges and developments. I will now present two different Canadian art and design schools that share similarities with Chavón La Escuela de Diseño in terms of their evolution. These two schools are: The Nova Scotia School of Art and Design and The Art Department at Central Technical School in Toronto, Ontario.

The Nova Scotia School of Art and Design

The first art and design school that can provide a basis for comparison with the evolution of Chavón's pedagogical structure is the Nova Scotia School of Art and Design. I will refer to it as NSCAD. By studying NSCAD's development, it is possible to identify a shift in the curriculum of the school from a traditional to a design focus that bears resemblance to similar events at Chavón.

Kennedy (1997) who led NSCAD for 23 years, establishes in his memoir how NSCAD's development was deeply influenced by a faculty committed to teaching. The faculty was also keenly aware of the demands of industry. In the same way as Chavón, NSCAD based its educational structure (standards, courses, programs, grades) on a belief in the educational value of learning through trial and error and its studio teaching programs were tied to the past, mostly based on traditional drawing and painting courses. Similarly to Chavón, NSCAD transitioned from its early traditional art program that focused on drawing and painting, to a more design oriented program that focused on a broader range of skills based related to the needs of 21st century artists and designers. (p. 192)

Part of this design oriented program at NSCAD and at Chavón includes the addition of visiting scholars, international artists and designers who bring new ideas that are relevant to the industry by offering workshops and lectures to the students and the community. The inclusion of these international visiting artists is now a core principle in both schools' pedagogical structure.

The Art Department of Central Technical School

The second school that reveals a similar pattern in the evolution of art and design schools is the Art Department at Toronto's Central Technical School. I will refer to this school as the CTS Art Department. In his study, Garnet (2015) shows how the identity of the CTS Art Department curriculum was based on the combination of technical and fine arts programs, similarly to Chavón and NSCAD.

Garnet explains how the Department always worked to reconcile the tensions between industrial and fine art practices to produce both skilled artists and designers. (p. 92) In the same way as Chavón, Garnet explains how throughout the years, new waves of students and teachers joined the CTS Art Department, while a number of established teachers remained and passed on the school's traditional culture, high standards, and educational philosophies previously established and promoted in the school. (p.118)

Another relevant similarity between The CTS Art Department and Chavón is how both schools went through major changes in their evolution due to financial problems. It is important to explain that these financial problems were different in the two cases. In the case of the CTS Art Department, there was a significant reduction in the Ontario government's annual spending for education (public, private and post-secondary). In Chavón's case, the financial problems were due to a significant decrease of student enrollment and a drop in funding.

The impact of these financial problems to the CTS Art Department and Chavón La Escuela de Diseño resulted in talk about the possible closure of the schools but, in both cases, the community of students and faculty members, stood up and joined forces to keep the schools alive and preserve their legacies by raising funds and implementing other solutions. In many ways, the threat of closure reinvigorated both schools and propelled them towards better futures.

A need for change

In the preceding paragraphs, we have clarified key developments at Chavón La Escuela de Diseño by comparing them to similar events at two Canadian art and design schools. We have come to understand that, despite financial challenges and the need to reinvent their pedagogical structures to stay in line with the demands of the art and design industry, these three different art and design schools have been able to maintain their vision of excellence in art and design education while still adapting to the pressures for educational change they have faced throughout the years.

After examining these different art and design schools, it is possible to conclude that Chavón stands on the right path in terms of the evolution of an art and design school, understanding that the right path is determined by a school's appropriate response to students needs and industry demands. The general concept that can be identified in the evolution of these three art and design schools is a school's responsibility to reinvent itself by engaging in a constant state of evolution while still preserving the essence of their pedagogical structures.

The need for more research

More research is needed to fully understand the pressures that a school like Chavón La Escuela de Diseño faces in its ongoing work to ensure its development and survival. As possible future research, I would like to explore how the pedagogical structures that are not part of the formal curriculum contribute to the school's educational vitality and how these are transmitted from one generation of students and faculty to another.

Future research on Chavón could also include further investigation into the reasons why the Dominican Ministry of Higher Education decided to deny the school's request for accreditation. Considering the significant contributions the school has made over four decades to the cultural life of the country, the lack of government funding for the school also requires clarification.

As I expressed in the beginning of this research, as an alumni of Chavón La Escuela de Diseño I am member of the Chavón community. I was inspired to develop this study because of the life changing experience I had when I was a student there. I wanted to make sense of the lifelong learning experience and lifelong relationships with classmates and professors that I acquired there. By developing this research I wanted to know what makes this place so unique and why all the members of its community feel such passion for it.

As an art education graduate student, I learned that in addition to the similarities shared with other art and design schools, it is Chavón's strong sense of community and the dedication of its faculty that make this place an unique art and design school.

As I was engaging in this study, I became reassured that Chavón will continue its journey in training skilled professional artists and designers in the Dominican Republic despite the challenges that it faces in its journey. What I found in oral accounts provided by the participants in this study is that its alumni, teachers and different members of its community are committed in keeping its legacy alive. I also learned that Chavón has been constantly reinventing itself each year through changes in its programs, adding teachers and new courses and making all efforts necessary to stay alive and relevant while providing its students and community with a quality and pertinent education.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Concordia University Ethics Approval

CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL ACCEPTABILITY
FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Name of Applicant: Gabriela Mejia
Department: Faculty of Fine Arts\Art Education
Agency: N/A
Title of Project: Chavón La Escuela de Diseño: The history and legacy
of a community of artists and designers in the
Dominican Republic
Certification Number: 30013125
Valid From: August 18, 2021 To: August 17, 2022

The members of the University Human Research Ethics Committee have examined the application for a grant to support the above-named project, and consider the experimental procedures, as outlined by the applicant, to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard DeMont".

Dr. Richard DeMont, Chair, University Human Research Ethics Committee

Appendix B: Summary Protocol Form (SPF) University Human Research Ethics Committee

Office of Research – Research Ethics Unit – GM 900 – 514-848-2424 ext. 2425 – oor.ethics@concordia.ca – www.concordia.ca/offices/oor.html

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ALL RESEARCHERS

Please take note of the following before completing this form:

- **You must not conduct research involving human participants until you have received your Certification of Ethical Acceptability for Research Involving Human Subjects (Certificate).**
- In order to obtain your Certificate, your study must receive approval from the appropriate committee:
 - Faculty research and student research involving greater than minimal risk are reviewed by the University Human Research Ethics Committee (UHREC).
 - Minimal risk student research is reviewed by the College of Ethics Reviewers (CER)
 - Minimal risk student research conducted exclusively for pedagogical purposes is reviewed at the departmental level. **Do not use this form for such research.** Please use the Abbreviated Summary Protocol Form, available on the Office of Research (OOR) website referenced above, and consult with your academic department for review procedures.

Note that activities of this nature are considered to be a pedagogical exercise and not research meant to contribute to the body of knowledge of the field. As such, while results may be disseminated in the public domain, they cannot be published in peer reviewed journals or presented at conferences as research findings.

- Research funding will not be released until your Certificate has been issued, and any other required certification (e.g. biohazard, radiation safety) has been obtained. For information about your research funding, please consult:
 - Faculty and staff: OOR
 - Graduate students: School of Graduate Studies
 - Undergraduate students: Financial Aid and Awards Office or the Faculty or Department
- Faculty members are required to submit studies for ethics approval by uploading this form, as well as all supporting documentation, to ConRAD. Access to ConRAD can be found in the MyConcordia portal.
- If necessary, faculty members may complete this form and submit it by e-mail to oor.ethics@concordia.ca along with all supporting documentation.
- Student researchers are asked to submit this form and all supporting documentation by e-mail, except for departmental review. Please note:
 - Handwritten forms will not be accepted.
 - Incomplete or omitted responses may result in delays.
 - This form expands to accommodate your responses.
 - Please ensure that all questions are answered completely (provide as much information as possible) and that samples of all materials are provided.
- Please allow the appropriate amount of time for your study to be reviewed:
 - UHREC reviews greater than minimal risk research at the monthly meeting, which is usually scheduled on the second Thursday of each month. You must submit your study by the 1st of the month to be reviewed at that month's meeting. Please confirm the date of the meeting on our webpage/FAQ section or with the staff of the Research Ethics Unit. Expedited reviews conducted by UHREC require a minimum of 8 weeks.
 - CER reviews generally require 4 to 6 weeks.
- Research must comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and guidelines, including:
 - The [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#)
 - The policies and guidelines of the funding/award agency
 - The [Official Policies of Concordia University](#), including the *Policy for the Ethical Review of Research Involving Human Participants, VPRGS-3*.

- The Certificate is valid for one year. In order to maintain their approval and renew their Certificate, it is the researcher's responsibility to submit an Annual Report Form one month before the expiry date that appears on the Certificate. Research must not be conducted under an expired certificate.
- Please note that all changes to an already approved protocol must be submitted for review and approved by the UHREC prior to being implemented. As such, you must submit an amendment request to the OOR.
- In order to ensure that ongoing research is compliant with current best practices and that the documents on file reflects the research activities researchers are carrying out, complete resubmissions are required every 5 years.
- Please contact the Manager, Research Ethics at 514-848-2424 ext. 2425 if you need more information on the ethics review process or the ethical requirements that apply to your study.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR STUDENT RESEARCHERS

- If your research is part of your faculty supervisor's research, as approved, please have him or her inform the Research Ethics Unit via e-mail that you will be working on the study.
- If your research is an addition to your faculty supervisor's study, please have him or her submit an amendment request, and any revised documents via e-mail. You must not begin your research until the amendment has been approved.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THIS FORM

- Please note that the SPF was designed to prompt reflection on the research project and all its possible implications. Please take the time to consider each question carefully in order to determine if and how it applies to your project.
- Please make sure that you are using the most recent version of the SPF by checking the OOR website.
- Please answer each question completely and provide as much information as possible; if you believe the question is not applicable, enter not applicable and provide justification.
- Do not alter the questions on this form or delete any material. Where questions are followed by a checklist, please answer by checking the applicable boxes.
- The form can be signed and submitted as follows:
 - Faculty research submitted on ConRAD will be considered as signed as per section 16.
 - SPFs for faculty research submitted via the faculty member's official Concordia e-mail address will also be considered as signed as per section 16.
 - Both faculty and student researchers may submit a scanned pdf of the signature page by e-mail. In this case, the full SPF should also be submitted by e-mail in Word or pdf format (not scanned).
 - If you do not have access to a scanner, the signature page may be submitted on paper to the OOR.

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

Please submit any additional documents as separate files in Word or PDF format.

STUDY TITLE: Chavón La Escuela de Diseño: The history and legacy of a community of artists and designers in the Dominican Republic

1. BASIC INFORMATION

Principal Investigator's Status:

- Concordia faculty
- Concordia staff
- Visiting scholar
- Affiliate researcher
- Postdoctoral fellow
- PhD Student
- X** **Master's student**
- Undergraduate student
- Other (please specify):

Type of Submission:

- X** New study
- Modification or a resubmission of an approved protocol. Approved study number (e.g. 30001234):

Where will the research be conducted?

- Canada
- X** **Another jurisdiction: Dominican Republic**

2. STUDY TEAM AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Role	Name	Department	Phone #	Email Address
Principal Investigator	Gabriela Mejia	Art Education	438-979-9972	gabimejia@gmail.com
Faculty Supervisor (For student research only)	R i c h a r d Lachapelle	Art Education	514-848-2424	richard.lachapelle@concordia.ca

Additional Team Members

Please provide names of all team members that will be interacting with human participants or handling research data, as well as those authorized to correspond with the OOR on behalf of the PI

Role	Name	Department /	Phone #	e-mail address

Committee Members (For research conducted by PhD/Master students):

Committee Member	Department
David Pariser	Art Education
Vivek Venkatesh	Art Education

Multi-Jurisdictional Research

Does the research involve researchers affiliated with an institution other than Concordia? If so, please complete the following table, including the Concordia researcher's role and description of the activities to be conducted at Concordia. If researchers have multiple institutional affiliations, please include a line for each institution.

If applicable, please provide a copy of any additional submissions and ethics certification from the collaborating institutions.

Researcher's Name	Institutional Affiliation	Role in the research (e.g. principal investigator, co-investigator, collaborator)	Research activities that will be conducted at this specific institution

3. PROJECT AND FUNDING SOURCES

Please list all sources of funds that will be used for the research. Please note that fellowships or scholarships are not considered research funding for the purposes of this section.

Funding Source	Project Title*	Award Period†	
		Start	End

Notes:

* Please provide the project title as it appears on the Notice of Award or equivalent documentation.

† If you have applied for funding and the decision is still pending, please enter "applied".

4. OTHER CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

- a. Will the research take place at the PERFORM Centre?
- Yes **No**
- b. Does the research involve any of the following (check all that apply):
- Controlled goods or technology
 - Hazardous materials or explosives
 - Biohazardous materials
 - Human biological specimens
 - Radioisotopes, lasers, x-ray equipment or magnetic fields
 - Protected acts (requiring professional certification)
 - A medical intervention, healthcare intervention or invasive procedures

Please submit any certification or authorization documents that may be relevant to ethics review for research involving human participants.

5. LAY SUMMARY

Please provide a brief description of the research in everyday language. The summary should make sense to a person with no discipline-specific training and it should not use overly technical terms. Please describe the project and its objectives, including any research questions to be investigated. Please also include the

anticipated value or benefits to society of the research. Finally, how will results be disseminated (e.g. thesis, presentations, internet, film, publications)?

The purpose of this research is to reveal the untold history and legacy of Chavón La Escuela de Diseño by focusing on its everyday culture and understand its educational philosophy as told by its students, teachers and administrators. As such, this research will address the following questions: What are the components of the pedagogy of post-secondary studio art education? What do the oral accounts from graduates, students, faculty or administrators associated with the school tell us about the school's impact in the community over the last four decades? How did the school create a legacy of artists and designers in the Dominican Republic?

The analysis of these stories aims to provide an understanding of the history of Chavón's contribution to post-secondary art education in the Dominican Republic and explore how the congruence of modernist and postmodernist orientations in Chavón La Escuela de Diseño's curriculum has been successful in the training and professional placement of its students.

The result of this research will be published in a thesis research highlighting how building a strong sense of community, promoting hard work and discipline, and teaching a curriculum based on technical skills, have helped create the legacy of a strong community of artists and designers in the Dominican Republic.

6. RISK LEVEL AND SCHOLARLY REVIEW

As part of the research, will participants be exposed to risk that is greater than minimal?

Greater than minimal risk means that the probability and magnitude of possible harms and risks implied by participation in the research are greater than those encountered by participants in aspects of their everyday life that relate to the research.

Yes

No

Has this research received favorable review for scholarly merit?

Scholarly review is not required for minimal risk research.

For faculty research, funding from a granting agency such as CIHR, FQRSC, or CINC is considered evidence of such review. Please provide the name of the agency.

For student research, a successful defense of a thesis or dissertation proposal is considered evidence of such review. Please provide the date of your proposal defense.

Yes **Funding agency or date of defense:** **May 20th, 2020**

No

Not required

If you answered no, please submit a Scholarly Review Form, available on the OOR website. For studies to be conducted at the PERFORM Centre, please submit the Scientific Review Evaluator Worksheet.

7. RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Will any of the participants be part of the following categories?

Please only check a box if the category of participant is a target population for this study.

- Minors (individuals under 18 years old)
- Individuals with intellectual disabilities
- Individuals with cognitive disabilities
- Members of Canada's First Nations, Inuit, or Métis peoples
- Vulnerable individuals or groups (vulnerability may be caused by limited capacity, or limited access to social goods, such as rights, opportunities and power, and includes individuals or groups whose situation or circumstances make them vulnerable in the context of the research project, or those who live with relatively high levels of risk on a daily basis)

a) Please describe potential participants, including any inclusion or exclusion criteria.

The participants for this research will be men and women who are members of the school community including graduate students, faculty and administrators.

b) Indicate if participants are a captive population (e.g. prisoners, residents in a center) or are in any kind of conflict of interest relationship with the researcher such as being students, clients, patients or family members. If so, explain how perceived coercion will be addressed in order to ensure that participants do not feel pressure to participate or perceive that they may be penalized for choosing not to participate.

Not applicable.

c) Please describe in detail how potential participants will be identified, and invited to participate. In addition, please submit all recruitment materials to be used (e.g. poster(s), flyers, cards, advertisement(s), letter(s), telephone, email, and other verbal scripts).

The participants will be identified by choosing three different people that can provide different stances of their experience in the school: one student, one teacher and one administrator. Each participant will receive an e-mail with a written invitation to participate in the project.

Note that while the snowball method of recruitment is acceptable, in order to protect the potential participants' right to privacy and confidentiality, the researcher is not permitted to initiate direct contact with a potential participant whose contact information is not publicly available. Rather, recruitment material must be provided by the researcher to their contacts for further dissemination. Those interested would then contact the researcher directly.

d) Please provide the anticipated start and end date of the research project.

Note that recruitment or direct interaction for data gathering purposes with human participants is not permitted until full ethics approval is awarded. Conducting research without valid ethics approval is considered research misconduct. Only UHREC/CER approved versions of research documents can be used.

This research project will start in May 2020 and will end in May 2021.

e) Please provide a detailed, sequential description of the procedures to be used in this study. Describe all methods that will be used (e.g. fieldwork, surveys interviews, focus groups, standardized testing, video/audio taping), as well as the setting in which the research will take place. In addition, please submit all instruments to be used to gather data, for example questionnaires or interview guides for each type of participant.

In this research, the data will be collected by writing the oral accounts of the different participants. These oral accounts will be recorded in an interview form. The interviews will be done by phone or video call and will be later transcribed and categorized into codes and themes.

Questionnaires for participants:

1. Please give us a general overview of your education and career.
2. What is/was your learning experience like as a student in Chavón? What is/was your teaching experience like in Chavón?
3. How would you describe a normal day in Chavón? (please consider the program, the students, the professor, the classroom, the artwork).
4. Can you compare the education received in Chavón with other art schools? How do they contrast and/or converge?
5. What aspects of the Chavón teaching-learning philosophy you consider make it so unique?
6. What are some of the challenges you encountered as an art student when doing your studies abroad in terms of your previous education in Chavón?
7. Is there any relevant story about your education in Chavón you would like to share? (any anecdote with a professor, peer or personal moment as a student you had).

j) Please describe any compensation participants may receive. Indicate the terms for receiving compensation, its value, and what happens to the compensation if a participant withdraws,

Not applicable.

k) Do any of the research procedures require special training, such as medical procedures or conducting interviews on sensitive topics or with vulnerable populations? If so, please indicate who will conduct the procedures, what their qualifications are and whether they have previous experience.

l) When doing research with certain groups of participants (e.g. school children, cultural groups, institutionalized people) and/or in other jurisdictions, organizational /community/governmental permis-

sion is sometimes needed. If applicable, please explain how this will be obtained. Include copies of approval letters once obtained.

8. INFORMED CONSENT

Please note that each participant should be provided with a copy of the consent form in addition to the one they sign, which is to be kept by the researcher.

Written consent forms and oral consent scripts should follow the consent form template available on the OOR website. Please include all of the information shown in the sample, adapting it as necessary for the research.

- a) Please explain in detail the process for soliciting informed consent from potential participants. In addition, please submit the written consent form.

Participants will first receive a written notification informing them about the research project, its purpose and the role they would be playing if they decide to participate in it. Once participants express their willingness to participate in interviews via e-mail, telephone and video calls, they will receive a written consent form that explains in details the conditions of their participation in these interviews. Participants will be asked to sign, scan and return the approved consent form to me via e-mail. They will be told to keep a copy for themselves.

- b) Please note that written consent is the preferred method for obtaining consent. However, in certain circumstances, oral consent may be appropriate. If oral consent will be used, please submit a consent script and describe how consent will be documented.

The use of an oral consent procedure needs to be justified and its approval is at the discretion of the applicable ethics committee (either the UHREC or CER). Note that convenience cannot be used as justification.

- c) Does the research involve individuals belonging to cultural traditions in which individualized consent may not be appropriate, or in which additional consent, such as group consent or consent from community leaders, may be required? If so, please describe the appropriate format of consent, and how it will be solicited.

9. DECEPTION

- a) Does the research involve any form of deception of participants? If so, please describe the deception, explain why the deception is necessary, and explain how participants will be de-briefed at the end of their participation. If deception is involved, please submit a debriefing script.

Please note that deception includes giving participants false information, withholding relevant information, and providing information designed to mislead.

- b) If deception is involved, please note that participants must be provided with the opportunity to refuse consent and request the withdrawal of their data once they know the details of the study. This should take place while it is still possible to give participants this option (e.g. prior to de-identification, publication, etc.). Please explain how this will be done and what timeline will be provided to participants for withdrawal of their data. Include a checkbox in the debriefing script so participants can clearly indicate their choice and a section for the participant's signature. Please provide a copy of the debriefing script.

10. PARTICIPANT WITHDRAWAL

a) Please explain how participants will be informed that they are free to discontinue their participation at any time without negative consequences.

In the written consent form, participants will be informed that they can stop their participation in the research at any time without any negative consequences.

b) Please explain what will happen to the information obtained from a participant if he or she withdraws. For example, will their information be destroyed or excluded from analysis if the participant requests it? Please describe any limits on withdrawing a participant's data, such as a deadline related to publishing data. Note that a clear deadline such as a specific date or timeframe must be provided.

If a participant withdraws from the research study, their information will be excluded if the participants requests it.

11. RISKS AND BENEFITS

a) Please identify any foreseeable benefits to participants.

Participants may experience pleasure at reminiscing about their experience at Chavón La Escuela de Diseño and may derive satisfaction in making a contribution to documentation about the school's history and achievements".

b) Please identify any foreseeable risks to participants, including any physical or psychological discomfort; emotional, social, legal, or political risks; risks to their relationships with others, or to their financial well-being. Please take the time to consider this question and mention any type of risk, no matter how remote the likelihood of it occurring.

There are few risks associated with participation in this study. It is possible that participants might experience some discomfort in recalling certain events.

c) Please describe how the risks identified above will be minimized. For example, if individuals who are particularly susceptible to these risks will be excluded from participating, please describe how they will be identified. Furthermore, if there is a chance that researchers will discontinue participants' involvement for their own well-being, please state the criteria that will be used.

The researcher will remind participants that they are free to not answer any question that makes them uncomfortable. Should the researcher encounter cases of major distress, she will refer the participant to suitable community resources and-or health practitioners for appropriate follow-up care.

d) Should the risks detailed above be realized, please describe how the situation will be managed. For example, if referrals to appropriate resources are available, please provide a list. If there is a chance that participants will need first aid or medical attention, please describe what arrangements have been made.

List of resources in the Dominican Republic for dealing with potential cases of distress:

Doctor Blas Valenzuela

Psychologist

(829) 342-6522

Therapy and assessment for young adults.

Consultations at various centers located in downtown Santo Domingo.

Doctor Martha Rodríguez Pérez

Psychologist(809)-563-0909

Centro de Salud Mental Familiar SAMEFA

Center specialized in providing mental health services to the community offering therapy and psychological and psychiatric treatment.

Centro Vida y Familia Ana Simó

Mental health center

(809)-566-0948

Center specialized in providing mental health services to adults and adolescents having the first Sexual Abuse Unit in the Dominican Republic.

Dr. Hector Guerrero Heredia

Psychiatrist

(809)-277-545412

12. REPORTABLE SITUATIONS AND INCIDENTAL FINDINGS

- a) Is there a chance that the research might reveal a situation that would have to be reported to appropriate authorities, such as child abuse or an imminent threat of serious harm to specific individuals? If so, please describe the situation, how it would be handled, and who the proper authorities are.

Please note that legal requirements apply in such situations. It is the researcher's responsibility to be familiar with the laws in force in the jurisdiction where the research is being conducted.

- b) Is there a chance that the research might reveal a material incidental finding? If so, please describe how it would be handled.

Please note that a material incidental finding is an unanticipated discovery made in the course of research but that is outside the scope of the research, such as a previously undiagnosed medical or psychiatric condition that has significant welfare implications for the participant or others.

13. CONFIDENTIALITY, ACCESS, AND STORAGE

- a) Please describe the path of the data from collection to storage to its eventual archiving or disposal, including details on short and long-term storage (format, duration, and location), measures taken to prevent unauthorized access, who will have access, and final destination (including archiving, or destruction).

Data will be collected using individual interviews.

- b) Please identify the access that the research team will have to participants' identity:
If you check more than one box, please specify the category of participants it applies to.

	Category	Definition	Category of Participant
<input type="checkbox"/>	Confidential	The research team will know the participants' real identity, but it will not be disclosed.	
X	Participant Choice	Participants will be able to choose which level of disclosure they wish for their real identity.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disclosed	The research team will know the participants' real identity, and it will be revealed in accordance with their consent.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anonymous	The information provided never had identifiers associated with it, and the risk of identification of individuals is low, or very low.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anonymous results, but identify who participated	The information provided never had identifiers associated with it. The research team knows participants' identity, but it would be impossible to link the information provided to link the participant's identity.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pseudonym	Information provided will be linked to an individual, but that individual will only provide a fictitious name. The research team will not know the real identity of the participant.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Coded	Direct identifiers will be removed and replaced with a code on the information provided. Only specific individuals have access to the code, meaning that they can re-identify the participant if necessary.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Indirectly identified	The information provided is not associated with direct identifiers (such as the participant's name), but it is associated with information that can reasonably be expected to identify an individual through a combination of indirect identifiers (such as place of residence, or unique personal characteristics).	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please describe)		

- c) Would the revelation of participants' identity be particularly sensitive, for example, because they belong to a stigmatized group? If so, please describe any special measures that will be taken to respect the wishes of the participants regarding the disclosure of their identity.

- d) Please describe what access research participants will have to study results, and any additional information that will be provided to participants post-participation (e.g. resources, etc.).
- e) In some research traditions, such as participatory action research, and research of a socio-political nature, there can be concerns about giving participant groups a “voice”. This is especially the case with groups that have been oppressed or whose views have been suppressed in their cultural location. If these concerns are relevant for the current participant groups, please describe how they will be addressed in the project.

Please note that for the purpose of this evaluation, co-researchers in a participatory research action are considered participants and must consent to participate and provide oral or written consent.

14. ADDITIONAL ISSUES

Bearing in mind the ethical guidelines of your academic or professional association, please comment on any other ethical concerns which may arise in the conduct of this research. For example, are there responsibilities to participants beyond the purposes of this study?

15. DECLARATION AND SIGNATURE

Study Title: Chavón La Escuela de Diseño: The history and legacy of a school of design and its community of artists and designers in the Dominican Republic

I hereby declare that this Summary Protocol Form accurately describes the research project or scholarly activity that I plan to conduct. I will submit a detailed modification request if I wish to make modifications to this research.

I agree to conduct all activities conducted in relation to the research described in this form in compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and guidelines, including:

- The [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#)
- The policies and guidelines of the funding/award agency
- The [Official Policies of Concordia University](#), including the *Policy for the Ethical Review of Research Involving Human Participants, VPRGS-3*.
-

Faculty Supervisor Signature: _____

Date: _____

FACULTY SUPERVISOR STATEMENT (REQUIRED FOR STUDENT PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS):

I have read and approved this project. I affirm that it has received the appropriate academic approval, and that the student investigator is aware of the applicable policies and procedures governing the ethical conduct of human participant research at Concordia University. I agree to provide all necessary supervision to the student. I allow release of my nominative information as required by these policies and procedures in relation to this project.

Faculty Supervisor Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C: Consent to participate in Pilot Study

Study Title: Chavón La Escuela de Diseño: The history and legacy of a community of artists and designers in the Dominican Republic

Researcher: Gabriela Mejia

Researcher's Contact Information: gabimejia@gmail.com (438)-979-9972

Faculty Supervisor: Richard Lachapelle

**Faculty Supervisor's Contact Information: richard.lachapelle@concordia.ca
(514)-848-2424 ext. 4783**

You are being invited to participate in the research study mentioned above. This form provides information about what participating would mean. Please read it carefully before deciding if you want to participate or not. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you want more information, please ask the researcher.

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of the research is to document the untold history and legacy of Chavón La Escuela de Diseño by focusing on its everyday culture and its educational philosophy as told by its students, teachers and administrators.

B. PROCEDURES

If you participate, you will be asked to provide information about your experience at Chavón, focusing on the school's impact in the community over the last four decades. In total, participation in this study will require that you take part in one or two 60-90 minute interviews and other research activities such as the discussion of photographs and archives over a period of approximately four months. Interviews and other research activities will be scheduled at the convenience of participants.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

This research is not intended to benefit you personally but it will contribute to the first academic writing of Chavón la Escuela de Diseño's history. The study will provide information on post secondary art schools in the Dominican Republic and the role they play in community building, promoting discipline and teaching a curriculum based on skills.

D. CONFIDENTIALITY

We will gather the following information as part of this research: Accounts of your experience at Chavón, discussion of photographs, archives, drawings and other documents.

We will not allow anyone to access the information, except people directly involved in conducting the research. We will only use the information for the purposes of the research described in this form.

The information gathered will not be anonymous. That means that it will be possible to make a link between you and the information you provide. If you prefer to remain anonymous and not have any link between you and the information you provide, you are free to do so.

We will protect the information by storing it in locations that are password protected or locked.

We intend to publish the results of this research. Please indicate below whether you accept to be identified in the publications:

I accept that my name and the information I provide appear in publications of the results of the research.

Please do not publish my name as part of the results of the research.

We will destroy the information five years after the end of the study.

F. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

You do not have to participate in this research. It is purely your decision. If you do participate, you can stop at any time. You can also ask that the information you provided not be used, and your choice will be respected. If you decide that you don't want us to use your information, you must tell the researcher before August 30th, 2020.

There are no negative consequences for not participating, stopping in the middle, or asking us not to use your information.

G. PARTICIPANT'S DECLARATION

I have read and understood this form. I have had the chance to ask questions and any questions have been answered. I agree to participate in this research under the conditions described.

NAME (please print) _____

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

If you have questions about the scientific or scholarly aspects of this research, please contact the researcher. Their contact information is on page 1. You may also contact their faculty supervisor.

If you have concerns about ethical issues in this research, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 or oor.ethics@concordia.ca

Appendix D: Consent to participate in second part of the study

Study Title: Chavón La Escuela de Diseño: The history and legacy of a community of artists and designers in the Dominican Republic

Researcher: Gabriela Mejia

Researcher's Contact Information: gabimejia@gmail.com (438)-979-9972

Faculty Supervisor: Richard Lachapelle

Faculty Supervisor's Contact Information: richard.lachapelle@concordia.ca
(514)-848-2424 ext. 4783

*Please note: This is a modified version of the previous consent form that you've already signed. With this second form, I am seeking your permission to use the information previously collected in your interview for a new purpose: my M.A. Thesis research. I am not requesting that you take part in any additional research activities. See "Section B" below for more specific information.

You are being invited to participate in the research study mentioned above. This form provides information about what participating would mean. Please read it carefully before deciding if you want to participate or not. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you want more information, please ask the researcher.

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of the research is to document the untold history and legacy of Chavón La Escuela de Diseño by focusing on its everyday culture and its educational philosophy as told by its students, teachers and administrators.

B. PROCEDURES

You previously participated in an interview for the project *Chavón La Escuela de Diseño: The pedagogy behind a community of artists* for a research class ARTE 682 in March 2019. In the previous project you provided information about your experience at Chavón that, with your permission, I will now use for a thesis project about the history and legacy of the school.

Your agreement to allow me to use the data you previously provided will contribute significantly to a wider understanding of the school's history and legacy.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

This research is not intended to benefit you personally but it will contribute to the first academic writing of Chavón la Escuela de Diseño's history. The study will provide information on post secondary art schools in the Dominican Republic and the role they play in community building, promoting discipline and teaching a curriculum based on skills.

D. CONFIDENTIALITY

We will gather the following information as part of this research: Accounts of your experience at Chavón, discussion of photographs, drawings and other documents.

We will not allow anyone to access the information, except people directly involved in conducting the research. We will only use the information for the purposes of the research described in this form.

The information gathered will be anonymous. That means that it will not be possible to make a link between you and the information you provide.

We will protect the information by storing it in locations that are password protected or locked.

We intend to publish the results of this research. Please indicate below whether you accept to be identified in the publications:

I accept that my name and the information I provide appear in publications of the results of the research.

Please do not publish my name as part of the results of the research.

We will destroy the information five years after the end of the study.

F. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

You do not have to participate in this research. It is purely your decision. If you do participate, you can stop at any time. You can also ask that the information you provided not be used, and your choice will be respected. If you decide that you don't want us to use your information, you must tell the researcher before you complete the last interview or research activity.

There are no negative consequences for not participating, stopping in the middle, or asking us not to use your information.

G. PARTICIPANT'S DECLARATION

I have read and understood this form. I have had the chance to ask questions and any questions have been answered. I agree to participate in this research under the conditions described.

NAME (please print) _____

SIGNATURE _____

DATE _____

If you have questions about the scientific or scholarly aspects of this research, please contact the researcher. Their contact information is on page 1. You may also contact their faculty supervisor.

If you have concerns about ethical issues in this research, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 or oor.ethics@concordia.ca.

Appendix E: Interview questions to Chavón graduates

1. Please give us a general overview of your education and career.
2. What is/was your learning experience like as a student in Chavón? What is/was your teaching experience like in Chavón?
3. How would you describe a normal day in Chavón? (please consider the program, the students, the professor, the classroom, the artwork).
4. Can you compare the education received in Chavón with other art schools? How do they contrast and/or converge?
5. What aspects of the Chavón teaching-learning philosophy you consider make it so unique?
6. What are some of the challenges you encountered as an art student when doing your studies abroad in terms of your previous education in Chavón?
7. Is there any relevant story about your education in Chavón you would like to share? (any anecdote with a professor, peer or personal moment as a student you had).

Appendix F: Interview questions to administrators and staff

1. What are the changes that Chavón is going through right now?
2. What are the biggest challenges faced by Chavón in the present?
3. What aspects of the Chavón teaching-learning philosophy you consider make it so unique?

Appendix G: Interview questions to rector

1. Can you tell us about your education? Where does Stephen Kaplan come from?
2. What is the teaching and learning philosophy of Chavón? How did it form?
3. Do you think maintaining this philosophy has been a challenge? Why or why not?
4. The opening of a new campus generated some changes along the curriculum. Can you identify some of these changes? Can you identify the aspects that remained as the essence of the program?
5. What can other art schools from around the world, learn from Chavón? (I would like to expand more on a pedagogical point of view of the students hard work, the high level of the faculty, the human relationships that are built and the pride of being part of the 'chavonero' community).

Appendix H: Chavón Academic Program

Fine Arts Program

First Year

First Trimester	Credits
Integrated Seminar I	3
Integrated Studio I	2
Analytical Drawing I	2
Anatomic Drawing I	2
Digital Image I	2
Materials and Space I	2
Art Seminar I	2
Oral and Written Expression	2
	Total 17

Second Trimester

Integrated Seminar II	3
Integrated Studio II	2
Analytical Drawing II	2
Anatomic Drawing II	2
Introduction to Painting	2
Digital Image II	2
Sculpture I	2
Art Seminar II	2
Sustainability	2
	Total 17

Second Year

Third Trimester

History of Dominican Art	2
Collage and Mixed Media	3
Contemporary Drawing I	3
Pictorial Media I	3
Sculpture II	2
Semiotics	2
Time	2
	Total 17

Fourth Trimester

Contemporary Thinking	3
Art Studio I	3
Contemporary Drawing II	3
Pictorial Media II	3
Three dimensional media: Metal, wood, fabric and ceramic	3
Electives: Photography / Animation	4
	Total 18

Fifth Trimester

Contemporary Thinking II	3
Art Studio II	3
Contemporary Drawing III	3
Pictorial Media III	3
Three dimensional media: Objects and Installations	3
Electives: Photography II / Performance	4
	Total 18

Fashion Design Program*First Year*

First Semester	Credits
Integrated Seminar I	2
Integrated Studio I	2
Oral and Written Expression	2
Image Concept	2
Digital Image I	2
Space and Materials I	2
Art Seminar I	2
	Total 16
Second Semester	Credits
Integrated Seminar II	2
Integrated Studio II	2
Digital Image II	2

Technical Laboratory I	2
Art Seminar II	2
Sociology of Fashion	2
	Total 12

Thirst Semester	Credits
Fashion Seminar	2
Fashion Studio I	2
Technical Laboratory	2
Fashion Illustration	2
Semiotics	2
Elective	3
	Total 13

Second Year

Fourth Semester	
Fashion Studio II	2
Representation I	3
Technical Laboratory III	3
Materiality I	2
Elective	2
	Total 10

Fifth Semester	
Portfolio	3
Representation II	3
Technical Laboratory IV	2
Materiality II	2
Electives	2
	Total 11

Graphic & Communications Design Program

First Year

First Trimester	Credits
Integrated Seminar I	2
Integrated Studio I	2
Oral and Written Expression	2
Image Concept	2
Drawing	2
Digital Image I	2
Space and Materials I	2
Art Seminar I	2
	Total 16

Second Trimester

Integrated Seminar II	2
Integrated Studio II	2
Digital Image II	2
Sustainability	2
Art Seminar II	2
Communication Seminar	2
Web Design	2
	Total 14

Third Trimester

Communication Seminar II	3
Multimedia	2
Typography Seminar I	2
Communication History	2
Time	2
Elective	2
Digital Techniques	2
	Total 15

Second Year

Fourth Semester

Communication Seminar III	3
Typography Seminar II	2
Typography Studio I	2

Technology Design I	2
Elective	4
	Total 13

Fifth Semester

Communication Seminar IV	3
Typography Studio I I	2
Technology Design II	2
Portfolio	3
Elective	3
	Total 14