

Thunderbird at ASU grad uses global roots to thrive in business

By Mary Hess, ASU News
May 1, 2025

Editor's note: *This story is part of a series of profiles of notable spring 2025 graduates.*

Diego Lara was born in Houston, Texas, to a family originally from Mexico. The first of his family to grow up in the United States, he credits his globally minded upbringing for shaping his early aspirations and his eventual journey at the [Thunderbird School of Global Management](#) at Arizona State University.

"I was constantly surrounded by stories of cross-border collaboration and innovation," he said. "Some of those stories came from Thunderbird alumni who inspired my parents to learn about the school. That early exposure planted a seed — I knew I wanted to be a global leader and a bridge between cultures. Enrolling at Thunderbird felt like coming home to a legacy I admired."

Lara, who is set to graduate with a [Bachelor of Science in international trade](#), has made the most of his time at Thunderbird, immersing himself in global experiences both in and out of the classroom.

His resume is a testament to this immersion; he served as president of the [Programming and Activities Board](#), vice president of events and recruitment for the Undergraduate Thunderbird Student Club, co-founder of the Plant Club, and was involved with founding the West Valley Community Gardens.

He also had the opportunity to study abroad in South Korea, Japan and Singapore with the Council on International Educational Exchange, and was recruited to work in innovative renewable energy projects with REDEX in Singapore — a continuation of his work with renewable energy from his role as a business development intern for MAE Energy in Chile. He also worked abroad, representing Mexico as a policy analyst in the Mexican Delegation to the OECD in Paris, France.

After graduation, he will continue through the [Master of Global Management](#) program with Thunderbird to complete his graduate degree with a concentration in digital transformation. He will continue to be involved with the school and seek opportunities to learn from various companies, professors and mentors.

Afterward, he plans to enter the field of international consulting, focusing on helping businesses and governments navigate complex global challenges, particularly in renewable energy,

technology and sustainable growth. Eventually, he hopes to work for an international organization such as the United Nations or OECD, contributing to initiatives that build bridges between sectors and regions.

As the recipient of several prestigious scholarships, including the Gilman International Scholarship, the Lentz Scholarship, and the Barton Kyle Yount Award, Lara has been recognized for both his academic excellence and global impact.

As he prepares to take the next step in his life, Lara's advice to new Thunderbird students is simple but poignant.

"Come in with an open mind and a genuine willingness to learn from those around you. Build relationships, get involved and try everything, even if you do it scared. It's the journey that makes Thunderbird and the college experience unique and transformative."

This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).

Main image



Diego Lara (right) meeting fellow Thunderbirds RJ Ramos (left) and Carola De Rada in Milan, Italy.
Photo courtesy of Thunderbird School of Global Management/ASU

Text image(s)



Diego Lara

Gallery



Diego Lara in Kyoto, Japan, in the CIEE program representing Thunderbird around the world.



Diego Lara and his team running Devilpalooza, the largest ASU event of the year.



Lara with the Ambassador of Mexico to South Korea Carlos Peñafoel Soto.



Diego Lara as president of the Programming and Activities Board with his team. Together they planned large events such as Battle of the Bands for ASU's Downtown Phoenix campus.



Lara speaking at the Thunderbird Undergraduate Programs Open House with fellow T-birds about their experiences at Thunderbird.