

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: The Start-Up Game Competition**

The Coles College of Business and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences within Kennesaw State University are committed to approaching international educational initiatives with innovation and creativity. This proposal requests support for a novel, inexpensive approach to giving our students exposure to executive decision-making processes in a global context. In addition to providing KSU students with a great opportunity to experience how people from other cultures make business decisions, our initiative would simultaneously deepen our relationships with partner institutions on four continents and provide data for a research project.

Our idea is to sponsor a competition among student teams in “The Start-Up Game” (STUG), an online simulation offered by Harvard Business School Publishing. We will create about 10 teams of five students each, with each team comprised of students from different partner institutions worldwide. In engaging in the simulation, five students in each group will find themselves mutually dependent on one another for achieving high levels of performance. We will incentivize the team members to participate and perform well by publicizing scores and recognizing the highest-performing team and team members with awards and winners’ certificates. The PI and co-sponsors of this program will develop assessments and collect data on the students before and after the simulation. Assessments will gauge students’ pre- and post-skill levels and measure the impact of STUG learning outcomes with respect to students’ approaches to addressing business challenges and cross-cultural encounters.

At the end of the program, we expect to have generated three major outcomes:

1. **Education:** Global experiences via actual travel are beyond the reach of many students. The STUG competition will provide an opportunity for about 50 students to engage with peers from partner institutions world wide in a meaningful business activity. We expect our students to gain a new appreciation of how other people think and decide, and, in the process, new insights on their own approaches to decision-making
2. **Relationships:** We will recruit participants initially from partner institutions in Japan, Colombia, Germany, and (if need be, expand recruitment to partner institutions in other countries) on this project. We have good relationships with all of them, and are fully confident that they will join this initiative by identifying some of their own students to participate. In doing so, our relationships with these schools will take on a new dimension, further deepening our ties around the world.
3. **Research:** The Principle Investigator of this project earned his PhD. in International Business, and the two supporting faculty members are steeped in international perspectives. As a team, we have the background and training to develop assessment tools and analyze and interpret the data we will collect from the students as meaningful findings. We anticipate that peers in our fields will also be interested in the STUG competition, and will present our findings at the national conference of NAFSA: Association of International Educators in Spring 2015 or 2016 (depending on submission deadlines).

While we are excited about the outcomes that could result from this initial initiative, in reality we are approaching this project as a test case. The launching of the STUG competition yields in and of itself scalable results, in that it can accommodate any number of student teams, and is relatively inexpensive, costing just \$12.50 per user. If the inaugural STUG competition works as well as we anticipate, we will have a suitable platform on which to expand and offer participation to additional partner institutions and additional students. We expect this to be the start of an annual event that supports KSU's strategic plan for internationalization in its goals 2, 3, and 6.