SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

Georgia

San Diego State University Georgia

UN global Compact

Communication on Engagement

2018-2020

April 26, 2020

Dear Mr. Secretary General,

San Diego State University Georgia is pleased to continue supporting the ten principles of the UN Global Compact with respect to human rights, labor, environment and anti-corruption. Since 2018, when SDSU Georgia joined the UN Global Compact, we have accepted a new cohort of students to our STEM programs and graduated 55 professionals in the local workforce. At the same time, SDSU Georgia continues supporting the local STEM community – universities, professors and organizations to adopt international standards.

SDSU Georgia pledges to continue our participation and engagement with the UN Global Compact in the following way(s): Conduct applied research and thought leadership to advance best practices, and to promote the UN Global Compact Ten Principles and educate a variety of audiences about sustainability.

We recognize that a key requirement for participation in the Global Compact is the submission of a Communication on Engagement (COE) that describes our organization's efforts to support the implementation of the ten principles and to engage with the Global Compact. We support public accountability and transparency, and therefore commit to report on progress within two years of joining the Global Compact and every two years thereafter according to the Global Compact COE policy.

Sincerely yours,

Halil Guven

Dean, SDSU-Georgia

San Diego State University

About SDSU Georgia

The Government of Georgian through the Millennium Challenge Account- Georgia, with funding from the U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) contracted with San Diego State University (SDSU) to provide an American university education in Georgia focused on STEM disciplines.

SDSU is approaching this project in partnership with Tbilisi State University (TSU), Ilia State University (ISU), and Georgian Technical University (GTU) – the three premier public universities in Georgia – to provide Bachelor's degrees in the country of Georgia. Using the facilities of these three universities, San Diego State University Georgia (SDSU-Georgia) focuses on STEM education to train an advanced workforce to meet the growing needs of Georgia. This program meets SDSU standards for curriculum, faculty training, and accreditation. As with all SDSU Bachelor's degrees, this program also includes general education to provide students with breadth in the liberal arts so necessary for an advanced workforce that will enhance the economy of the country. SDSU has been responsible for admissions, curriculum, quality of instruction, renovation of facilities, updating equipment and implementation of the program.

SDSU established a STEM campus in Tbilisi, Georgia in 2014. SDSU Georgia admitted its first cohort of students in 2015. SDSU Georgia project has completed its fifth year of operation as five cohorts of students have be recruited by Academic Year (AY) 2019-2020 at Georgia campus in six Bachelor of Science (BS) degree programs: BS Computer Engineering; BS Electrical Engineering; BS Chemistry/ Biochemistry; BS Computer Sciences, BS Civil Engineering; and BS Construction Engineering. By 2023, SDSU-G will graduate five cohorts and 600+ students in total.

SDSU Georgia students receive admission directly from SDSU home campus; they become fully matriculated SDSU students, studying at the Tbilisi campus.

Upon graduation SDSU Georgia students receive internationally accredited American degree from San Diego State University; this is exact same degree, with all the accreditation (WASC. ACS and ABET).

Courses are taught in English, using an identical curriculum to SDSU main campus.

This program makes SDSU degree affordable to many students in Georgia and the region.

Goal of the project

SDSU Georgia program has aimed to reach the following goals:

- Increase awareness of the importance of STEM education in Georgia and prepare highly qualified STEM professionals as SDSU Georgia program graduates
- Initiate reforms in STEM subjects in Georgia and introduce international accreditation concepts to the state universities in Georgia
- Build capacity through renovation / construction activities and faculty development.

Research opportunities for students and young Georgian scholars

One of SDSU Georgia's priorities is to provide students and young Georgian scholars with ample practical experience, equipping them with skills to become capable professionals in the job market.

Summer Research Program

In 2018 San Diego State University Georgia through the Grant for Enrichment and Development of Student Experiences (GEDSE), supported by Millennium Challenge Account Georgia launched Summer Research Program. The principal aim of the initiative was to offer unique first-hand experience of carrying out highly sophisticated research to academically qualified SDSU Georgia students and to motivate them to gain additional experience in their field of study. Since 2018, 32 (thirty-two) students from different majors were financed to conduct their Summer Research in a sphere of their professional interest alongside professors at San Diego State University main campus.

The duration of the research was 4 weeks. Each student worked under the supervision of their mentors. The research method was both - academic and laboratory based. Students had an exceptional opportunity to work with cutting edge equipment while working in Labs, developing professional laboratory skills, applying theoretical knowledge against practical and gain research conduct skills.

A few examples of topics of their research include: Fall Detection and Prediction using machine learning (Computer Engineering), Quasidynamical symmetries in nuclear shell model (Electrical Engineering), Using Protein Design to Engineer a Scaffold for Regio-Selective C-H Functionalization

(Chemistry/Biochemistry).

Supporting STEM research and graduate education in Georgia; building on current partnerships and relationships in Georgia

In 2019, Dr. Walter Oechel, an SDSU professor who works in the areas of plant eco-physiology, systems ecology, global change, and biosphere-atmosphere interaction, has obtained the U.S. state department funding for Supporting STEM research and graduate education in Georgia; building on current partnerships and relationships in Georgia. The project will strengthen the quantitative and qualitative research skills and academic writing skills of young Georgian scholars; raise collaborating Georgian scholars' research capacity to international standards; and mentor and coach Georgian scholars for publishing research papers in Georgian and Western academic peer-reviewed journals in STEM fields. This proposal includes teaching scientific writing in English.

SDSU Georgia has committed to support the project through the existing relationships with its partner academic institutions and funding partners.

The direct beneficiaries of this partnership program will be young Georgian academics including especially assistant professors, Ph.D. candidates, and M.A. students. The indirect beneficiaries will be their Georgian host universities and quality and nature of STEM Research and publication conducted in Georgia. This project is designed to improve the standards of Georgian academic research at Georgian universities and will significantly increase the interaction between Georgian and American academics and researchers.

Participating faculty will provide state-of-the-art equipment, labs, and facilities at no cost to the student participant or project. Student participants will be mentored as if they were a U.S. student while they are at SDSU main campus and when they return. This includes guidance in quantitative and qualitative methodologies, scientific ethics, publishing in peer-reviewed, ISI-ranked, high impact journals, and oral and poster presentations.

The work proposed here will expand Georgian researchers' capacity to use quantitative and qualitative methods in STEM-related research topics, develop analytical papers, and eventually publish and communicate research findings to educators, researchers, practitioners, and policy makers. These skills will help increase the earning potential of Georgians through improvements in the quality of

education and research in STEM. There will be a special emphasis on a path to the establishment of economic growth.

The main approach will be two-fold. One is the presentation of short courses in Georgia that cover key modern approaches to research and publication. The other is to collaborate with our partner universities in Georgia (TSU, ISU, and GTU) to provide mentoring training of Ph.D. students - the next generation of Georgian STEM faculty and researchers. Excellent, high quality students will be competitively selected to conduct their Ph.D. research at SDSU. In this way, students will be exposed to modern, cutting-edge research ideas, methodologies, approaches, and equipment. They will also obtain training in scientific writing, peer review, ethics, and modern bibliographic approaches in the course of conducting, analyzing, presenting, and publishing their dissertation research. This approach will have a direct benefit to the student and bolster the science and engineering workforce in Georgia as these students attain positions in academia and industry in Georgia. Further, there will be a synergistic effect on current Georgian faculty as they jointly supervise and publish the results of the student's research with SDSU faculty.

Data Security and FERPA

SDSU Georgia respects and recognizes students' privacy and operates under The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), that guarantees both the confidentiality of students' education records and students' right of access to their own records. Every year SDSU Georgia staff take Data Security and FERPA online course to ensure that students' educational records and personal data are well protected.

Focus on the women and disadvantaged groups

One of SDSU Georgia's main goals is promoting STEM programs to female students to achieve gender equality in the STEM field and make quality education accessible for everyone despite their social statuses and gender.

Women and socially and economically disadvantaged (ethnic minorities, rural students, and socially vulnerable families) student populations represent important resources for SDSU Georgia. SDSU Georgia recognized the need to improve recruitment of women and socially and economically

disadvantaged students in STEM disciplines. To expand the participation of these groups, SDSU Georgia has used a series of targeted interventions and outreach programs to increase the participation of women and disadvantaged students to levels representative of the population.

To achieve the abovementioned goals, SDSU Georgia created a financial assistance model to fit the women and disadvantaged groups. Students from socially vulnerable families qualified for full need-based scholarships for the four years of their studies, and SDSU Georgia has managed to keep the female participation at previously unprecedented 40%. Nevertheless, SDSU-G has been able to outreach students across the administrative border in Abkhazia, which resulted in the first-time enrollment of students from Georgia's occupied territory of Abkhazia.

Career Development Center

In 2018, SDSU Georgia formed a Career Development Center (CDC) to support students in developing and achieving career goals and provide opportunities to build professional network.

The center focuses on equipping students with good self-presentation skills, and marketing students' skills to public and private partners. CDC trains students in resume writing and job interviewing techniques, helps them find job/innovative project funding opportunities, executes MOU's with public and private partners to create employment opportunities and organizes Job/Internship fairs. CDC also helps the students with their graduate applications. Graduating students have already secured acceptance at various prestigious universities, including: KU Leuven (Belgium), Rutgers University (U.S.), Dartmouth College (U.S.), Case Western Reserve University (U.S.), and University of Maryland, College Park (U.S.).

Student Life

SDSU Georgia actively supports students' social life and extracurricular activities. One of the practices SDSU Georgia has implemented to enrich student life is student clubs.

Student clubs focus on particular disciplines and hobbies to provide extracurricular opportunities to students, to promote healthy life and well-being. Currently, there are following active student clubs:

- Art club
- Artificial Intelligence club
- Basketball club
- Board Game and Chess club
- Cycling club
- Futsal club
- Hiking club
- Math, Physics and Quantum Dynamics club
- Personal Wellness club
- Rugby club

As part of introducing SDSU student life practices, SDSU Georgia organized and the student body elected its first Associated Student Chapter of SDSU Georgia in December 2017. This intended to help keep the finger on the pulse of student satisfaction. SDSU Georgia Associated Students Board of Directors has successfully connected with the SDSU A.S.B.O.D. to further their understanding of how a student body organization should function. SDSU Georgia supports the new initiatives of the board to stimulate the student life experience. The first board served until the end of 2018-2019 Academic year. In March 2019, the new A.S.B.O.D. was elected to serve for the 2019-2020 Academic Year. Board Elections will be held every year, in March.

Pre-Accelerator Program

On January 31, 2019 Georgia's Innovation and Technology Agency (GITA), SDSU Georgia signed an agreement with educational consultancy Startup Wise Guys, management consultancy Civitta and GITA to train SDSU Georgia staff to run two pre-accelerator programs for SDSU Georgia students in the next three years.

A pre-accelerator is an intensive, month-long training for individuals creating a startup business. The training takes startups from planning and ideation to comprehensive proposals and pitches to potential investors. As part of the agreement, Career Development Center Director Brianna Quintero attended a 100+ hour pre-accelerator manager training program at GITA in January-February 2019, led

by experts from Startup Wise Guys and Civitta to develop the first internationally trained pre-accelerator managers from leading universities in Georgia.

In training, Quintero learned how to set key performance indicators, choose appropriate participants and develop curricula to run efficient pre-accelerator programs. In the spring of 2020, SDSU Georgia will host its first international pre-accelerator program. At the end of the program, the students will have detailed designs of their startups and will be able to pitch their completed startup plans investors and partners in the U.S. Students of all majors will be invited to the month-log program, held in English.

Guest Speaker Series

In collaboration with the Career Development Center and Millennium Challenge Corporation, in the 2018-2019 academic year SDSU Georgia established a Guest Speaker Series, featuring a variety of exceptional people who work in Georgia. Our speakers have introduced students to fascinating ideas and career opportunities within and beyond their STEM based university education. educating yourself current project Georgia. In 2018-2019 SDSU Georgia hosted seven Speaker Series events.

Partnership with Polyvim LLC

Currently, San Diego State University Georgia is building a partnership with a local recycling company, Polyvim LLC. Our university aims to create a healthy and green environment by educating our students on how recycling is crucial to protect the ecosystem of our planet. The waste bins will be placed in our campus and administrative office to collect the PP and PE plastic.

In the frame of the partnership, SDSU Georgia staff plans to conduct presentations for students, to create informative posters and place waste bins to encourage them to separate plastic from other waste.