



**SAN DIEGO STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

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**Georgia**

**San Diego State University Georgia**

**UN global Compact**

**Communication on Engagement**

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**Georgia**

**2020-2022**

April 11, 2022

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 graduated 250 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,



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## About SDSU Georgia

The Government of Georgia 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 offers 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

# SDSU

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# Georgia

## **SDSU Georgia's actions and activities**

As part of the UN Global Compact Network San Diego State University Georgia continues to support Ten Principles and Sustainable Development Goals through conducting applied research and thought leadership to advance best practices, quality education, gender equality, and decent work and economic growth. To meet all the mentioned goals, SDSU Georgia conducted the following activities:

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

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”. The project is aimed to 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 policymakers. These skills will help increase the earning potential of Georgians through improvements in the quality of education and research in STEM. The project consists of two parts: one is the presentation of short courses in Georgia that cover key modern approaches to research and publication. The other is to collaborate with SDSU Georgia’s partner universities in Georgia (TSU, ISU, and GTU) to provide mentoring training of Ph.D. students - the next generation to Georgian STEM faculty and researchers.

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

Since there have been applied regulations and restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the project experienced some difficulties regarding its full implementation. However, SDSU and SDSU Georgia have been able to make a progress to meet the objectives. Since December, 2020 five mini-courses were held via Zoom meetings. Overall, up to 800 individuals, including the undergraduate and graduate students, administrators, observers, presenters, and academic staff members from Georgian public and private universities, attended the sessions. Presentations were very well received and had positive feedback.

Under the second part of the project, up to 18 Georgian scholars matriculated in a Ph.D. program at a Georgian accredited University, are given an opportunity for an initial visit of 3 (three) months at San Diego State University. There is provision for an extension for another 3 (three) months based on research performance at San Diego State University. As a result of the first call for applications, 3 Ph.D. students were selected, and effective January 19, 2022, are conducting a part of their research in San Diego. In parallel to the abovementioned, the second call for application was announced. This resulted in the selection of 6 Ph. D students from Ilia State University. The 3rd call for applications is anticipated to be opened in May 2022.

### **Faculty Development Program**

Faculty Development Program aims to strengthen SDSU Georgia's capacity-building strategy. Each semester, faculty members from partner universities are selected to visit the main campus to build familiarity with SDSU curricula, develop teaching skills within specific courses that they might later assist with or teach in Georgia, develop laboratory skills, an understanding of SDSU's assessment practices, and to build collaborations with SDSU faculty, both in terms of teaching and research. Since 2014 more than 102 faculty members have visited San Diego State University. Another cohort of faculty and administration staff members (10 individuals) are currently at the main campus participating in the training. The next group comprised of 7 visitors is planned to arrive in San Diego in September 2022.

### **Focus on the women and disadvantaged groups**

One of SDSU Georgia's main goals has remained to promote 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 the 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.

As a result, out of 287 currently enrolled students 42% are women. This is the highest number of female participation in STEM programs in Georgia. The SDSU Georgia Associated Students Board of Directors is also predominantly comprised of women, with seven out of 10 board members, including the president and executive vice president.

### **Career Development Center**

SDSU Georgia continues to provide career development services to its students and alumni. Every semester Career Development Center organizes Career Month and Job/Internship Fairs. Different activities, workshops, and series of Industry meetings are held to support students and prepare them for job opportunities and life after graduation. These events allow them to gain interview skills and connect with company representatives, learn about the company's business processes and hiring practices directly from them and receive answers to their questions. Interested students might also be invited to have a one-on-one interview. As a result, over 180 students participated in Career Month activities, and more than 100 interviews were held after the virtual Job Fair.

SDSU Georgia continues to support students in developing and achieving career goals and provide opportunities to build a professional network.

### **Data Security and FERPA**

SDSU Georgia respects and recognizes students' privacy and operates under The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which guarantees both the confidentiality of students' education records and students' right to access 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.

### **Beyond 2023**

SDSU Georgia has introduced American university education in Georgia focused on STEM disciplines and targeted to produce specialists educated to current international standards. Our activities and actions serve to prepare high-quality scientists and professionals for companies operating in Georgia, that eventually will contribute to the economic growth of the country.

SDSU Georgia is actively collaborating with SDSU and Millennium Foundation to maintain its presence in Georgia beyond 2023 and continue promoting STEM programs and offering high-quality education.

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