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Santander Bank and Independent College Fund of New Jersey Partner with Rider University to Expand Electronic “International Classrooms” in New Jersey

LAWRENCEVILLE - While it is no longer uncommon for college students to study abroad for a semester, students at Rider University have the additional opportunity to participate in classes with international counterparts in Northern Ireland, Iraq or other countries, directly from their Rider University classrooms. On a weekly basis, students in the Student Global Village engage in dialogue with international peers via videoconferencing, often discussing sensitive topics to learn more about the issues that frequently lead to international conflicts.

Now, thanks to a new partnership with Santander Bank and the Independent College Fund of New Jersey (ICFNJ), Rider will expand this innovative program, named the Student Global Village, by inviting faculty from New Jersey colleges and universities (and beyond) to set up similar Student Global Villages at their respective institutions.

Headed by Roberta Fiske-Rusciano, Ph.D., the project will train academics on how to plan for, organize, and utilize appropriate technologies for fostering dialogues and establishing their own peace-building curricula. The participating colleges and universities will then join an international network of Student Global Village participants and researchers.

According to Dean Patricia Mosto, the Student Global Village provides a unique learning experience for students. “We’re extremely pleased that Santander Bank and the Independent College Fund of New Jersey recognize the important contributions that the Student Global Village model brings. Here at Rider, students are transformed by their experiences. Both a U.S. faculty member and her counterpart abroad design the curriculum and facilitate discussion allowing the students to engage in a structured conversation, based on a customized curriculum. Our students have had fulfilling classroom experiences with peers in Northern Ireland, Germany, Egypt, and Iraq, among other countries. I could not be happier that other students in other universities will soon be engaged in similar, international experiences.”

About the Student Global Village

Rider’s Student Global Village was founded in 2004 and provides a faculty-facilitated opportunity for mediated exchanges among university students in different nations via a web-based videoconferencing system. Since the pilot project began, the program has grown
exponentially. To date, nearly 400 Rider University students have participated in the program with peers at the University of Dresden, Germany; Birzeit University, West Bank, Palestine; American University of Cairo, in Cairo, Egypt; Central European University, Budapest, Hungary; Notre Dame University in Beirut, Lebanon; Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, Romania; University of Kufa, in Najaf, Iraq; and the University of Ulster in Jordanstown, Northern Ireland. Together, students from different perspectives have jointly negotiated and developed guidelines for a civil society while engaging in respectful and difficult dialogues. The program is now expanding to organize an international self-sustaining network of universities that fosters Student Global Village forums.

About Santander Universities
Santander Universities is a philanthropic arm of the Santander Group that is focused on advancing the needs of society as a whole through higher education. It is a unique global initiative that distinguishes Santander from other banks and financial institutions. Santander Universities provides support to universities and colleges for teaching and research, international cooperation, knowledge and technology transfer, entrepreneurial initiatives, student mobility and innovation. Since it was first established in 1996, Santander Universities, through its local affiliates, has forged long-term relationships with more than 1,100 universities around the world. In 2013, it supported more than 4,500 new initiatives and over 31,000 scholarships globally. Santander Universities was first introduced in the United States in 2009 and now has collaboration agreements with 28 American universities and colleges. Santander Universities funded over 1000 scholarships and initiatives in 2013 totaling over $11.5 million in the United States.

About ICFNJ
Since 1953, the Independent College Fund of New Jersey (ICFNJ) has empowered deserving students to realize their goals by strengthening the state’s independent colleges and universities with support for strategic investments in programs, scholarships and education. ICFNJ is a cooperative effort between business and academic leaders who recognize the important role the independent higher education sector plays in growing New Jersey’s economy. ICFNJ helps its 14 member institutions partner with the corporate community to fulfill the goal of educating students who contribute to the economic, ethical and intellectual aspirations of the State of New Jersey. Since its first allocation in 1954, ICFNJ has raised and distributed more than $66 million in support of its member institutions.

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