

Winter 2026 Study of the U.S. Institute (SUSI) for Student Leaders on Entrepreneurship and Economic Development

Deadline for submitting applications: Sunday, **September 28, 2025, 11:59 pm**

University students from **Chile**, Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil interested in the topic of **Entrepreneurship and Economic Development** are invited to submit applications for the **winter 2026 Study of the U.S. Institute for Student Leaders**. The five-week program will be conducted in **English** and will take place at the Institute for Training and Development (ITD) in Amherst, Massachusetts from January 10 – February 14, 2026. Any date changes will be shared at the time of selection.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

Study of the U.S. Institutes (SUSIs) for Student Leaders are intensive short-term academic programs that provide groups of foreign undergraduate students with a deeper understanding of American excellence and leadership through a thematic lens. Each Institute hosts 20 participants. The Institutes consist of a four-week academic residency with a series of seminar discussions, readings, group presentations, and lectures. Site visits, cultural activities, and community service complement coursework and academic sessions. The Institutes will include a one-week integrated academic field experience in the United States.

The SUSI on Entrepreneurship and Economic Development will provide participants an overview of principles of entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship by reviewing the development, history, challenges, and successes of U.S. enterprises and business leadership in the United States and globally. Topics may include, but are not limited to, strategies for economic development, financial literacy, banking, microfinance, organizational development and management, innovation, emerging markets and risk analysis, and strategic business planning. Specific program elements will include visits to community development organizations, economic development centers, a local makerspace, or a courthouse. Sessions cover debate techniques and the business model canvas. The program includes travel to Boston and New York City and an academic field experience to Tucson, Arizona. Community service might include

engagement at a local food pantry. The Program Office and implementing partner reserve the right to alter academic sessions and program activities.

Another Institute for Student Leaders from the Western Hemisphere on Women's Leadership will take place concurrently at a different host institution. The Institutes will conclude with a closing forum where participants from both Institutes will come together to network and discuss their action plans. During the forum, participants will have the opportunity to meet peers from Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Peru who are participating in the other Institute.

CANDIDATE DESCRIPTION AND QUALIFICATIONS

Participants are expected to be highly motivated first through third year undergraduate students from colleges, universities, and other institutions of higher education. Participants should demonstrate leadership through academic work, community involvement, and extracurricular activities. Participants should be receptive of other cultures and be prepared to engage with others in mutual respect. Their fields of study will be varied and may include the sciences, social sciences, humanities, education, business, and other professional fields. Note that the program schedule and syllabus are designed for the group, and that sessions will not be customized to their individual interests.

Candidates nominated for this program will:

- demonstrate English language proficiency (speaking, reading, writing, listening).
- demonstrate interest in the topic of Entrepreneurship and Economic Development.
- be between 18 and 25 years of age.
- have at least one semester left of their undergraduate studies, and be committed to returning to their home universities following completion of the program.

- demonstrate strong leadership qualities and potential in their university and community activities.
- indicate a serious interest in learning about the United States.
- have a sustained high level of academic achievement, as indicated by grades, awards, and teacher recommendations.
- demonstrate commitment to community service and extracurricular university activities.
- have little or no prior study or travel experience in the United States or elsewhere outside of their home country.
- be mature, responsible, independent, confident, open-minded, tolerant, thoughtful, and inquisitive.
- be willing to respectfully engage with fellow participants representing different backgrounds and different points of view.
- be willing and able to fully participate in an intensive academic program, community service, and educational travel.
- be comfortable with campus life, prepared to share living accommodations, and able to adjust to cultural and social practices different from those of their home country.

OTHER ESSENTIAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

Program Funding: ECA will cover all participant costs, including program administration; international and visa travel, travel allowances, domestic travel, and ground transportation; book, cultural, mailing, and incidental allowances; and housing and subsistence, as well as arrange and pay for participants' international and visa travel costs and travel allowances within set limits and in coordination with posts.

Program Requirements and Restrictions: Note that you are applying for an intensive and rigorous academic Institute and are expected to fully participate in all aspects of the program. Participants must attend all lectures, participate in all required organized activities, and complete all assignments. **Due to the intensive nature of the program, participants should not expect to fulfill professional or academic obligations, including remote work for jobs or internships, classwork, or examinations for their home university, while in the United States.** Doing so will count as an unexcused absence from program activities. Family members and/or friends may not accompany or join participants for any part of the program.

English Language Ability: English Language proficiency is required to participate in this program. All candidates must be proficient in English so that they can actively participate in the academic program. Therefore, candidate interviews will be conducted in English.

Housing and Meal Arrangements: Housing will be in shared or single university dorms on campus or full-service hotels within walking distance of most classroom activities. Male and female participants will be housed in separate quarters. In addition to regular group meals and a university meal plan, participants may have access to a kitchen to cook some meals on their own. All participants will be expected to respectfully share communal spaces and any necessary responsibilities.

Special Accommodations: Care will be taken to ensure that any special requirements regarding diet, daily worship, housing, and medical care are satisfied. Special accommodations will be made available to the greatest extent possible.

Health Benefits: All participants will receive the Department of State's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) health benefit during the U.S.-based in-person component, which provides coverage of up to \$100,000 with a \$25 co-pay per medical visit and a \$75 co-pay per emergency room visit, for the duration of the program. Pre-existing conditions may be covered up to \$100,000, subject to policy exclusions and limitations. Information on the health benefit program may be found online at <https://www.sevencorners.com/gov/usdos>.

Travel Policy: Participants are not allowed to arrive in the United States prior to the start date of the SUSI or remain in the United States after the end date. To avoid the logistical difficulties of delayed arrivals, **participants will be expected to make accommodations with their university and exam schedules to be able to arrive on the scheduled arrival day.** Similarly, participants will not be permitted to leave the SUSI to visit relatives or friends while in the United States. Participants are required to return to their home countries immediately following the end of the Institute.

Deadline for submitting applications: Sunday, September 28, 2025, 11:59 pm.

Applications must be submitted in English

Link to the application form: <https://forms.gle/PQkuZkiTYrjcxE1g8>