

# SCO for GBA 685: International Collegiate Business Strategy Competition

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## **I. General Information**

Course number: GBA 685

Title: International Collegiate Business Strategy Competition

Units: 3 credits

Prerequisites: Students should have completed most of the first year of courses. Consent of Instructor is required. Students must apply to be in the class.

Course Coordinator: Dr. Annette Lohman

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## **II. Catalog Description**

Using simulation, student teams run simulated company and compete for best performance against other university teams. Financial, marketing, production, and management decision-making, business plans, annual reports, and presentations evaluated by judges at competitive event.

## **III. Curriculum Justification**

The College of Business Administration has identified eight sets of learning goals for its curriculum: Critical Thinking, Ethics, Team and Interpersonal Skills, Communication Skills, Business Functions, Quantitative and Technical Skills, Domestic and Global Environment, and International. The goals most addressed by this course are the following:

Critical Thinking – GBA 685 supports this goal by requiring that students analyze the industry and competitive environment of their simulated company to make decisions about how to run their company. The writing of their business plan requires that students think critically about this environment and the reason behind the plan to which they have committed their company. During their presentation to the judges, they will be required to justify their plans, their decision-making processes and final decisions.

Business Functions – The International Collegiate Business Strategy Competition utilizes a simulation that was expressly designed to give students the experience of making decisions in functional areas of Marketing, Finance/ Accounting, and Operations. Human Resources is integrated into the Marketing and Operations functions. Through the simulated experience, students learn the importance of integrating decisions across the business.

Quantitative and Technical Skills – The application of previously learned quantitative skills and spreadsheet applications is a significant part of the Competition. Students must perform an economic forecast prior to forecasting sales. Excel templates for sales forecasting, production planning, and pro forma financial statements are used by students to plan company operations.

Domestic and Global Environment – The simulation is international in its scope. Students are responsible for running operations in three domestic and one foreign market. The economies of the domestic and foreign market and their demand structures, customer demographics and preferences, and labor compensation rules differ and students must learn not only to adapt to these differences but to use them to create a competitive advantage for their company.

International – The simulation addresses the complexities of running an international company which has to manage decision-making across different countries and the transfer/repatriation of profits to the home country.

#### **IV. Course Objectives Course Objectives and Learning Goals:**

In this course, the following course objectives and learning goals receive emphasis:

Critical Thinking – Students will learn to:

- Use of both quantitative and qualitative data to identify and analyze strategic issues and problems
- Establish corporate and business-level goals and objectives
- Develop realistic programs of action.

Business Functions – Students will:

- Gain an increased understanding of how the various business functions must be integrated in companies in order to achieve superior performance
- Use this understanding to make functional decisions designed to address company-wide plans and problem-solving.

Global and Domestic Environment – Students will:

- Learn to plan for the effect of different domestic and foreign demand structures and economies.
- Gain an increased understanding of effects of macroeconomic factors such as inflation in the foreign country and its effects on currency fluctuation and company profitability.

International – Students will:

- Learn to market to two different countries with different product requirements.
- Learn to utilize locational advantages of foreign operations for competitive advantage
- Learn to manage cash flow of their simulated company taking into account repatriation of cash from foreign operations based on government rules.
- Gain understanding of the complexities of managing a company with operations in two different countries

Team and Interpersonal Skills – Students will:

- Develop skills in working together with other students to make integrated decisions to solve business problems that arise in competitive environments under intense time pressure.

- Strengthen team writing and presentation skills through the production of written team documents (business plan and annual report) and creating and delivering a professional team presentation to judges.

Communication Skills – Students will:

- Learn to write a Strategic Business Plan which they must implement for their simulated company
- Learn to design and write an Annual Report for one year of their simulated company's operations.
- Refine their presentation skills through the development and presentation of their plans to class members and the Competition's Judges.

**V. Outline of Subject Matter**

This course is unique in many ways but especially because the content is determined by the International Collegiate Business Strategy Competition in which students are registered. In teams, students manage a simulated company which is competing against other similarly managed companies. They manage their companies through making quarterly decisions for five simulated years (20 quarters or decision rounds).

In addition, they are required to write a Strategic Business Plan and an Annual Report reporting on the results of their third year of running their company. Since students are required to have completed introductory courses in Management, Accounting, Marketing, and IS Communications, much of the learning in the course occurs through application of learning from the prerequisites to the Competition environment rather than through new content delivered through text-book and class lecture. However, during the course, students will receive lectures on strategic management and strategic planning. They will also have instruction sessions on preparing a sales forecast, preparing a production planning worksheet, and preparing pro forma financial statements. Students will also receive instruction on preparing a Strategic Business Plan and an Annual Report.

Course Outline. This course follows the schedule of the Competition. Therefore, students registered in the course begin and end the course a couple of weeks earlier than the traditional course semester.

Course Introduction: Students meet in early December to receive an overview of the spring Competition and Competition materials so that they may prepare for the course during the winter holidays.

Course Preparation: Students, on their own, prepare for the Competition by reading the simulation's Player's Manual during the winter break. In the week before classes start, students in the course will meet 2-3 times to receive instruction on preparing for their first decisions for the Competition. Organization materials from the Competition are sent to students during January.

The Competition Begins (Remote Phase). Students meet during their regular class hours and submit their first set of decisions for their simulated company during early February. Three additional sets to complete one year of decisions are made completing the first year of the team's management of their company. Feedback in the form of results are returned to the teams after each decision round and become the basis of the next set of decisions.

Preparation of the Strategic Business Plan. Following the first year (four quarters) of their company's simulated operations, students receive a lecture on and prepare a Strategic Business Plan for the remaining four simulated years of the Competition. The plans are submitted to the Competition Judges for evaluation in March.

Continuing Play. Students continue to make decisions for eight additional quarters (two years) through the first week in April. The decision submission schedule is determined by the Competition. They continue to receive feedback in the form of company reports that track their performance compared to their competitors.

Preparation of the Annual Reports. Following three simulated years of managing their company, students are required to prepare an Annual Report. They receive guidance in the form of lecture and coaching on how to prepare the product. They bring their completed Annual Report with them to the next stage of the Competition, the Intensive On-site Phase where they submit it to Judges for evaluation.

Intensive On-site Phase. After completing the decision rounds of the Remote Phase of the Competition, in mid-April, students travel to the Competition Hotel where they spend Thursday day through Saturday night on the Intensive On-site Phase activities. These activities include:

- Two years (eight quarters) of decisions in a time-constrained, intense, pressure-cooker environment
- Meeting informally with Competition Judges who will evaluate their teamwork and decision-making systems
- Formal presentations to the Competition Judges. This presentation is intended to simulate a Board of Directors meeting during which the top management team discusses their Strategic Business Plan and its implementation, company performance, and plans for the company in the future.
- Social and networking activities with other universities are offered on the first and last night of the Intensive On-site Phase.

Reflection on Learning. Following the Intensive On-site Phase which completes the Competition, students no longer meet during scheduled class hours. They are responsible for individually turning in a final paper in which they reflect on the learning that occurred during the Competition course.

## **VI. Methods of Instruction.**

GBA 685 is taught in a small class format since the university only fields a couple of undergraduate and graduate teams which meet at the same time. In this format, the instructor's main role is as coach to the teams, helping them to think systematically and

preparing for the Competition. Some lectures are delivered on relevant topics such as preparing the Strategic Business Plan and the Annual Report. However, most of the time, the coaching takes the form of working with the teams one-on-one to assist them in analyzing the results of their decisions and their progress in the Competition. There are no traditional exams although quizzes to monitor the degree of preparedness for the Competition may be appropriate.

## **VII. Example of Course Materials.**

Course materials come from the Competition. *The Business Policy Game* by Cotter and Fritzsche is the current simulation used by the Competition. The Player's Program is provided to competitors as is a 200+ page manual which describes the competitive environment, company operations, and the decisions they will be making. Should the simulation change, it is anticipated that the manual accompanying the simulation would also change.

## **VIII. Instructional Policies.**

### Policy on Classroom Behavior:

- The instructor has the right to specify the rules for classroom behavior.

### Policy on Make-up Exams and Assignments:

- The instructor develops his or her own policy.

### Policies on Withdrawal, Late Withdrawals, and Incompletes:

- The instructor shall use the current university policy on dropping and withdrawal from classes set forth in the schedule of classes.

### Academic Integrity:

- Students in this course will be expected to comply with the current CSULB Policy on Academic Integrity outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity.

### Campus Computer/Network Usage:

- Students may use the computing resources in this course and have to agree to be subject to the guidelines of the "Policy Governing Access to and Use of CSULB Computing Resources".

### Disabilities:

- Students with disabilities are responsible for notifying their instructor as early as possible of their needs for an accommodation of a verified disability. A student with a disability is urged to consult with Disabled Student Services as soon as possible in order to identify possible accommodations to enhance academic success.