Kansas City, MO – The Kauffman Foundation of Kansas City announced today it will award grants of up to $5 million to as many as five to seven U.S. universities to make entrepreneurship education a common and accessible campus-wide opportunity. The goal of the Kauffman Campuses initiative — the first such effort of its kind — is to transform campus life so that entrepreneurship is as integral and natural a part of the college experience as dorms, cramming for exams and parties.

In June, the Kauffman Foundation selected 15 universities from among thirty schools invited to demonstrate interest by developing a preliminary concept to compete in the Kauffman Campuses initiative. Each of the 15 universities selected was awarded a $50,000 planning grant to assist with the development of a comprehensive proposal to be presented in December. At that time, five to seven universities will be awarded grants of up to $5 million each based on their creativity and commitment to make entrepreneurship training and experiences available across college departments and to students of diverse disciplines. Universities must also demonstrate their ability to raise matching funds.

The Kauffman Campuses initiative builds on the Foundation’s rich, 10-year history of advancing entrepreneurship, which has included substantial support of entrepreneurship education efforts at hundreds of U.S. colleges and universities. The initiative is based on the Foundation’s belief that entrepreneurship is the lifeblood of the American economy and that colleges offer an invaluable opportunity for reaching the country’s future entrepreneurs — those innovators and leaders who will invent, create jobs and fuel economic growth.

“We hope to effect nothing less than a cultural transformation,” said Carl Schramm, president and CEO of the Kauffman Foundation. “These grants will unleash the power of entrepreneurship on campus. We want all students – not just those enrolled in business or engineering schools – to have access to the skills, orientation and networks that lead to greater opportunities for them and result in more jobs, innovation and prosperity for America.”
Today, more than 1,500 colleges and universities offer some form of entrepreneurship training, a trend that started in the 1980s and continues to flourish. Interest in entrepreneurship education is beginning to spread beyond traditional business schools, engaging the next generation of thought leaders in every discipline, from life sciences to liberal arts, in becoming entrepreneurs in their fields.

“College campuses are idea incubators where people learn skills and forge work habits and relationships that serve them all their lives,” said Rob Chernow, the Kauffman Foundation’s senior vice president of entrepreneurship. “We know there’s an entrepreneurial spirit sweeping across college campuses today, and we’re thrilled to build on this momentum so that entrepreneurship becomes a natural and vital aspect of the American educational experience.”

The fifteen universities competing for multi-million-dollar grants this December are:

Florida International University
Howard University
Purdue University
Syracuse University
University of California-San Diego
University of Illinois
University of Maryland-Baltimore County
University of Memphis
University of New Mexico
University of North Carolina
University of Rochester
University of Texas-El Paso
University of Wisconsin
Wake Forest University
Washington University

“Through the Kauffman Campuses initiative, we hope to ultimately stimulate the creation of new models of entrepreneurship education that spread far beyond the five to seven schools that receive these awards, and we hope to repeat this initiative in the future,” Schramm said. “In doing so, students, faculty, staff and alumni on many campuses throughout the country will benefit for years to come.”

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The Kauffman Foundation of Kansas City is committed to advancing entrepreneurship in America and improving the education of children and youth. The Kauffman Foundation was established in the mid-1960s by the late entrepreneur and philanthropist Ewing Marion Kauffman. More about the Kauffman Foundation is available at www.kauffman.org.