



Gerstacker *Entrepreneur Spotlight*

International Entrepreneurial Exchange

**Project:**

Business plan

Participants:

Gerstacker Institute students, l'Ecole Supérieure de Vente students

Locations:

Albion, MI;
Saint-Germain-en-Laye, France

History:

Gerstacker students travel to France every October, French students travel to U.S. every April; Project work takes place August-April

For six years, students of Albion College and the Gerstacker Institute's International Entrepreneurial Exchange course have had the privilege of working with French students at l'Ecole Supérieure de Vente in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, France. These two groups of students collaborate on a nearly two semester long business plan to be presented at Albion College's annual Elkin Isaac Symposium in April, when the French students join their American peers on Albion's campus.

In October 2016, ten students from Economics & Management Professor Vicki Baker's BUS 351 traveled to Saint-Germain-en-Laye, France to work face to face within their multinational groups at l'Ecole Supérieure de Vente. This year, the pool of students was divided into four different groups working on four unique entrepreneurial business launches: "My Briefcase", a service connecting business recruiters with elite, highly desired candidates, "Go Global", a service providing healthcare resources via a smartphone app to travelers abroad, "New Start", a service connecting retired professionals on a consulting-type basis to startup businesses in need of expertise, and "International Innovators", a service that aligns college students in need of internships to businesses seeking candidates on a temporary, project-focused basis. These students learned and quickly excelled at working collaboratively and cooperatively with peers whose business and classroom behavior perspectives differ widely,

and developed quick and close friendships in the process.

During the Albion students' weeklong travel in France, French students and staff at l'Ecole Supérieure de Vente coordinated activities for their American peers, such as a boat cruise along the River Seine in Paris, a visit to the Palace of Versailles, and a visit to Montmartre — beholding the beauty of Sacré-Cœur. Outside of the classroom, students took part in an extremely enriching cultural experience at the hands of gracious French hospitality. As these groups of students continue to use technology such as Skype and WhatsApp to communicate and advance their projects, the American students are planning activities for their French friends to enjoy during their time here in April.



These students will no doubt walk away having had the experience of a lifetime — venturing out of their comfort zones and working creatively with a cultural group different from their own. The International Entrepreneurial Exchange has been a rewarding, challenging, and growth inducing experience for Albion students and never disappoints.

