The National Foreign Language Center has funded the Kean University Startalk Student Program 2011. Janis Jensen, Director of the School of Global Education and Innovation at Kean University, will serve as the project Director. The program will enroll 20-25 Hindi and 15-20 Urdu Intermediate Range heritage language learners in a four-week standards-driven blended learning experience totaling 96 instructional hours.

New Jersey is home to large Hindi and Urdu communities, many of which are located in close proximity to Kean University. As such, this program is designed for high school heritage language students in these communities who wish to gain higher levels of language proficiency through meaningful study of Hindi/Urdu in real world contexts and in contemporary learning environments that integrate innovative learning strategies and technologies. Heritage students will also benefit by opportunities offered through the program for proficiency certification for educational and/or future employment purposes.

The primary goal is to increase students' language proficiency by one sub-level in one or more skill areas in Interpretive Reading, Presentational Speaking and Presentational Writing and to improve linguistic accuracy/cultural skills in Interpersonal Speaking through daily interactions with students from India and Pakistan while participating in a Global Project-Based Learning (PBLg) experience entitled "Educating Children Worldwide."

PBLg is an instructional model that builds upon the PBL concept by addressing the development of global competence and awareness of cultural perspectives through ongoing opportunities for cross-cultural interactions, mediated by the use of technology as an integral part of the learning process. PBLg will support and enhance language instruction through daily interactions with heritage language learners and their peers in India and Pakistan that center on a global issue, invite deep engagement and lead to the creation of a final product and performance for an authentic audience. Students will engage in learning opportunities that extend the boundaries of the classroom and consistently place knowledge/culture acquisition and language skill development in a global context.