The following project proposal was created by a community partner of the Upstate Institute to describe the way they would like to engage with a Colgate student this summer. The research project proposed will be a full-time research project conducted by a Field School Fellow this summer. Below, the partner describes their organization and the research project, as well as a statement of benefit derived by the community for this project. The proposal also mentions logistical considerations and required skills for a student interested in doing this work.

Village of Hamilton Airport Commission

The Village of Hamilton Airport Commission requests the assistance of the Upstate Institute in carrying out an economic impact survey. The purpose of this inquiry is to gain an idea of how much external business the airport attracts to the local community. That information will be of value to the Village of Hamilton, to commercial establishments in our area, and to the Airport Commission in making its future dispositions.

Hamilton Municipal Airport (ICAO identifier KVGC) commenced operations in 1963. Originally a grass strip, it now has a grooved-asphalt runway, 5,314' (1,600m) in length and 75' (23m) in width, and is capable of handling traffic up to large business jets. Published instrument approaches (RNAV and VOR-A) have been established to enable round-the-clock and bad-weather operations, along with an automated weather observation system. Fuel is available for gas-turbine and piston-engined aircraft, and a fixed-base operator provides major aircraft maintenance services. At present, 36 aeroplanes are based at Hamilton, along with a glider club. In 2016, some 17,300 movements took place at the airport (one "movement" is a single landing or takeoff), nearly half of which was by transient traffic.

The airport aims to be entirely self-supporting; that is, to impose no tax burden on local residents. It has been successful in that endeavour, financing its operations from fuel sales, hangar rental and landing fees. In recent years it has been expanding. A full-length taxiway has been constructed, enabling us to make more intensive use of the runway and facilitating larger aircraft. With grant support from the New York State Department of Transportation, ten new hangars have recently been built: all are now occupied, significantly increasing our annual revenue. An additional grant has enabled us to begin work on replacing our terminal building and expanding our apron to make more parking space available for business aircraft. Plans to install a twenty-four-hour self-fuelling facility, which will make KVGC a more attractive stop for transient traffic, are in progress.

We propose to design a questionnaire that visiting pilots this summer will be asked to complete, so as to find out what local businesses are patronised by transient users and how much is spent. We hope that the Upstate Institute would see its way to assigning us a student-worker who will process the data and present the results in a formal report, with a targeted completion date of December 2019. The position requires no special skills beyond a familiarity with basic quantitative methods and knowledge of the Microsoft Office software package, especially MS Excel.