

Understanding the Role and Effectiveness of Alumni Connections on Experiential Learning

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Introduction: Key Questions

- ❖ How does experiential learning tie to alumni connections?
- ❖ What is the College Fed Challenge and what activities link it to alumni?
- ❖ What do St. Lawrence University students, alumni, and hosts report about the connections?
- ❖ Where do we go from here to be more effective instructors?

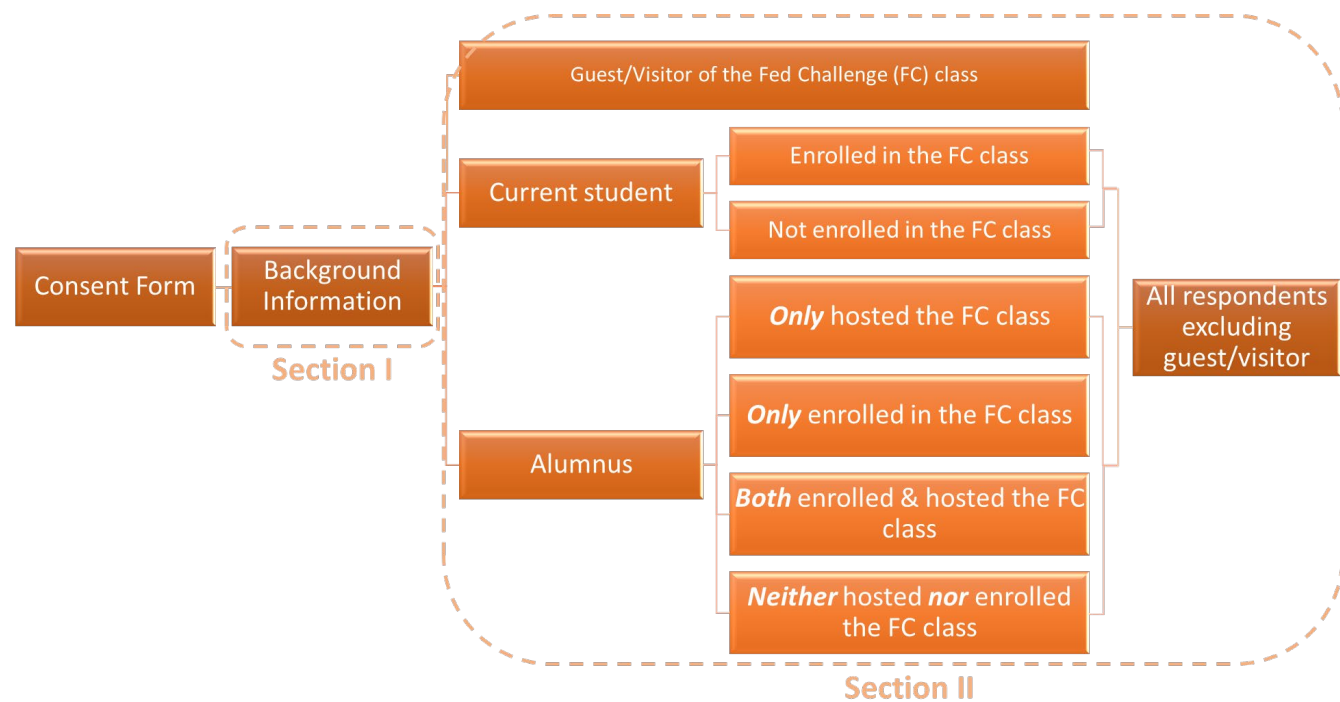


Experiential Learning: Kolb's Cycle

Activity	
1) Concrete Experience	❖ New experience that one encounters which can be in an educational or professional setting
2) Reflective observation	❖ Learners reflects and contemplates upon the experience
3) Abstract conceptualization	❖ Learner adjusts and modifies their concepts, ideas, and approaches to an experience
4) Active experimentation	❖ When the learner applies what they have learned and tests this new approach
	❖ Discuss 'Big Questions' in finance, economics, and monetary policy
	❖ Mock presentation
	❖ Question and answer sessions with alumni

Methods and Subjects

Qualtrics was employed to create and distribute our survey.



Survey Results I

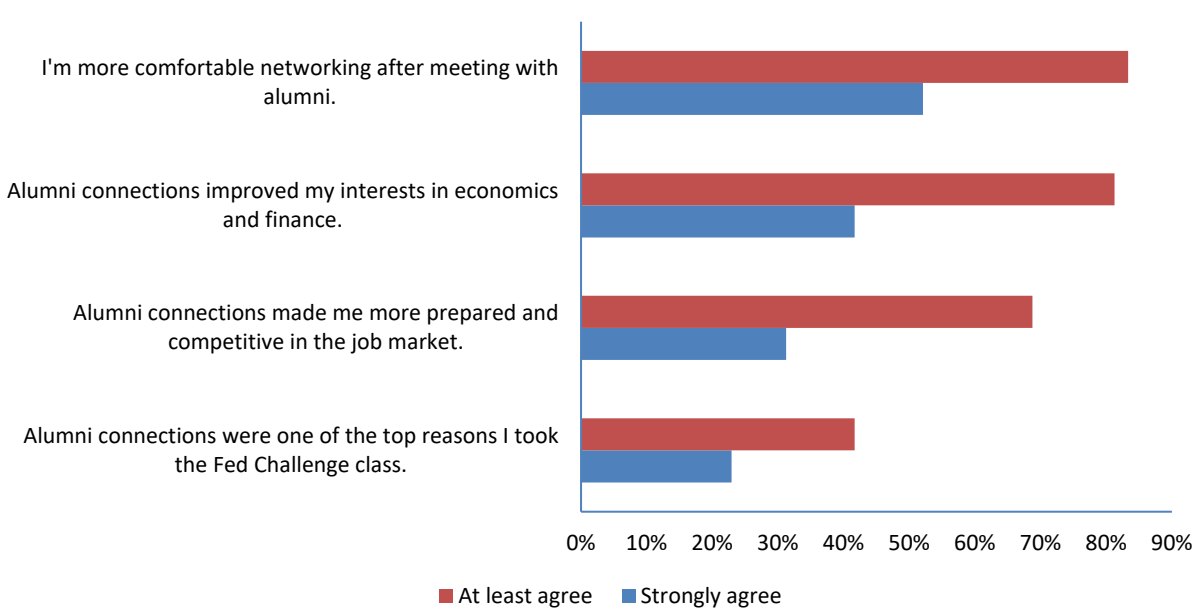


Figure 1. Evaluation of Alumni Connections in the FC Class

Survey Results II

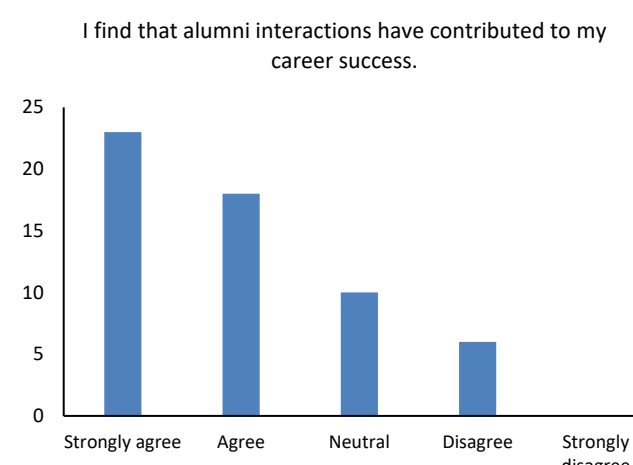
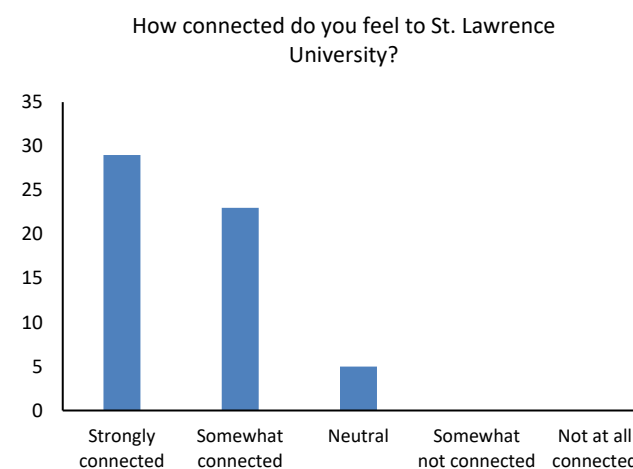


Figure 2. Alumni-University Connectedness and its Contribution to Career Success

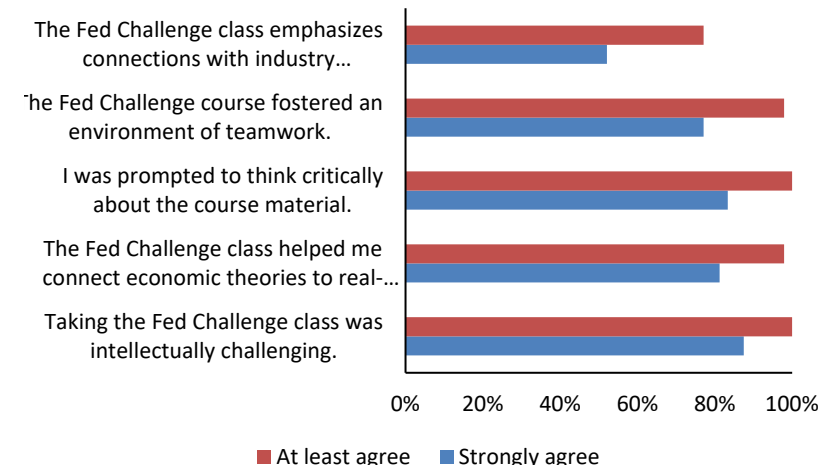


Figure 3. Feedback from Respondents Who Took the FC Class

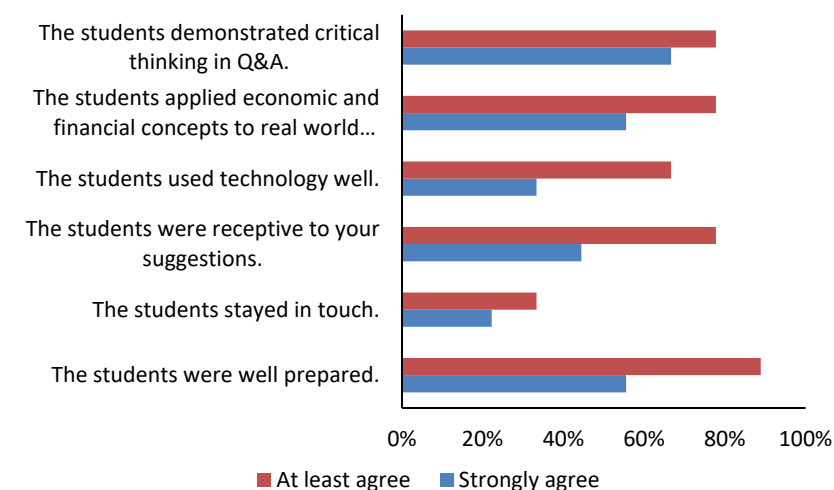


Figure 4. Feedback from Hosts/Guests of the FC Class

Open Ended Evidence

1) Apply economic theory to job-related tasks

- ❖ "...more about putting theory into practice..."
- ❖ "... greatly improved my ability to relate concepts to the real world."

2) Career connections with alumni

- ❖ "We had excellent alumni mentors."
- ❖ "...was something I was able to speak to during interviews, that set me apart from the competition."

3) Skills building

- ❖ "Greatly improved my ability to think critically"
- ❖ "It also helped me become more comfortable presenting in front of audiences that were not my peers."

Conclusion

- ❖ Almost 3/4ths of respondents agree that alumni interactions contributed to their career success.
- ❖ Students were well prepared and alumni hosts emphatically report they would host students again.
- ❖ The class fostered teamwork and critical thinking, encouraged real life applications and emphasized connections with industry professionals.
- ❖ Potential to expand upon positive connections going forward.

Future Work

- ❖ Continue sending survey to more subjects to increase sample size.
- ❖ Send survey to SLU's students who didn't take the Fed Challenge class to compare educational satisfaction.
- ❖ Use students who didn't take the Fed Challenge class as a control group to do econometric analysis (i.e., run regression to see by how much university-alumni connections improve study/career success).

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