**SUMMER FURSCA EOSR**

**Title of Project**: The Benefits and Needs of Financial Education for Young Adults

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**Introduction**

As part of my summer FURSCA research, my supervisor, Vicki Baker and I conducted a study to understand the benefits/needs of financial education for young adults and Albion residents. For the purposes of this study, I am relying on individuals who are enrolled in postsecondary education, Albion College Students, and Albion residents. I am targeting these two populations of individuals (Albion College students, Albion residents) to support a comparative analysis. The goal is to have at least 30 individuals in each of these categories to participate in the study. The comparison of Albion College students and Albion residents will potentially surface socio-demographic and financial variances between each group. The project is survey-based. The survey included approximately 23 questions/statements spanning across the following areas: budgeting, debit/credit, investment in stocks and bonds, savings, tracking of monthly expenses, and demographic information. I also give each participant a $5 incentive for their participation.

The data was recorded using Excel Spreadsheet. Given FURSCA was fully online this summer, participants were recruited through technology - email, social media, and announcements on CPO and through FURSCA for those students still participating this summer virtually. I employed the support of the Albion Chamber of Commerce, the Work First program (job search and short-term education/training), Albion Public Library, a handful of Albion Churches, and Albion’s local Economic Development Center to recruit Albion residents. Also, I utilized the Albion Colleges Career and Internship Center, the Build Albion Fellows program (on-campus student organization), Gerstacker Institute, and students taking online summer courses to recruit Albion College students. The goal of this project is to learn about the financial literacy experiences of young adults enrolled at Albion College and Albion residents by examining participants' lack of financial knowledge through the survey data and recruit 30 participants for each group. Furthermore, the goal of this project is to address the lack of financial literacy taught in educational institutions to youth.

**Results**

As I stated previously, my goals for this project were to understand participants financial knowledge through survey data, address and prove the lack of financial literacy taught in educational institutions to youth, and have 30 participants for each group (Albion College Students, Albion Residents). I successfully achieved my goal in discovering that schools are not incorporating finance-related courses in the curriculum and understanding participants financial knowledge. During the second week of project, I had some unexpected challenges recruiting Albion residents. My initial plan was to recruit Albion residents in person but due to Covid-19 social distancing regulations, there have been challenges securing Albion Resident participation. I was not able to obtain enough Albion resident participants for my project, I only recruited at total of 13 participants. I was successful in recruit 42 Albion College students. During the analyzation of the data, I noticed interesting trends from a couple of questions in the survey. I asked participants to state whether they learned how to manage money as part of another subject or class, a subject or class specifically about managing your money, in an activity outside of school, or not at all. Below are the results:

Albion Residents



 Albion College Students



Another question that I found intriguing was when I asked participants “Where do they get information about money matters (such as spending, saving, banking, investment)?’’ Below are the results:

 Albion Residents



Albion College Students



After examining results of both questions, there is obviously room for education and growth regarding the financial capability of youth in middle schools, high schools, and higher education across the United States. Albion College students and Albion residents’ results were low regarding acquiring money management skills in classrooms. Participants had higher results in gaining knowledge from relatives and the internet. It seems then that there needs to be a combination of solid-state mandates and policies for financial education, making it a priority for schools, as well as good implementation and enforcement of those policies within the states. Where we see the two of those combined is where young adults can be the most primed for financial success.

**Conclusions**

Growing up in my hometown in Albion, I noticed that marginalized individuals in my community are not taught nor exposed to financial education/literacy at a young age, and they suffer as a result. Once I decided to attend Albion College, I always dreamt of starting my own nonprofit organization focused on teaching financial education to my community - Albion. I found it fascinating that I had such a close relationship with participants because I am an Albion resident and an Albion College student. This research will affect participants in a positive manner. Beginning important financial skills conversations with young adults can help them learn the importance of savings, budgeting, career planning, and how each has a profound impact on their future financial success. For Albion as a community and my Albion College peers, I would love to see the younger generation obtain knowledge that is necessary to make financially responsible decisions; decisions that are integral to our everyday lives. I hope to bridge the gap between Albion College students and Albion residents so others can identify a connection between two people or groups who share little in common with one another.

I welcome the opportunity to present my research at the Elkin R. Isaac Symposium. Sharing my research at the symposium will introduce audiences, young and old, to the topic of financial literacy, particularly the need for financial literacy to develop financially educated young adults. Further, this FURSCA project will inform the next step of my journey, a directed study in the fall, in which I will develop financial literacy programming and deliver it to targeted populations in the Albion community and Albion College students. The knowledge learned from this research will help me develop my senior thesis, which will shed light on the importance and lack of financial literacy taught in educational institutions, the long-term effects of financial illiteracy, financial education race and gender gap, etc.

My research made a significant difference in my life. This experience has given me additional practice to use my theoretical knowledge to compare groups of people that have diverse backgrounds and find innovative ways to include financial education in schools. There were roadblocks along this project, but this experience has taught me that it’s ok if my project didn’t turn out the way I expected it to be. There will always be more opportunities to conduct another project successfully.

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