

Reflection on the ECON 3492-Practicum – Fall 2023

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Taking part in the Economics Practicum course has been an enriching educational experience for me. Throughout the course, we studied monetary policy, understanding its formulation, and application. Participating in the FED Challenge 2023 was an incredible opportunity that allowed us to present our ideas on monetary policy in a competitive environment. This project provided us with a deeper understanding of the various policy instruments employed by the Federal Reserve in order to have a stable economy through its dual mandate of maintaining price stability and maximum employment. We have acquired a deeper understanding of how policy implementation affects larger financial institutions through interest rates and open market operations; these insights also extend to the different policy tools available to smaller entities, such as community banks that cannot engage with the Federal Reserve at the same level as larger financial institutions. Moreover, our visit to the Federal Reserve in New York offered practical glimpses into the application of monetary policy, enriching our academic understanding with hands-on experiences and giving us the chance to engage with the economic departments of other universities.

The practicum uniquely surpassed traditional courses by also enriching our knowledge in the functions of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC). We studied the role of the institution and its importance in maintaining the safety of the economy through its supervision of banking risk and compliance. For the FDIC project, we formulated a policy change recommendation that addressed the decline of small community banks. The course emphasized that these institutions, despite their smaller size, are essential for local economic growth. Community banks' tailored financial products cater to the distinct needs of their communities, fostering entrepreneurship, job creation, and infrastructural development. Their practice of reinvesting deposits within the community fortifies economic expansion and ensures localized capital benefits for local residents.

Our team recognized the need within the Economics Department at UConn Stamford and took proactive steps to establish the UConn Stamford Economic Research & Policy Council. This student club emerged with the primary objective of encouraging active participation in the Fed Challenge while serving as a platform for organizing informative trips and learning activities. Our vision for this club revolves around creating a supportive network where experienced participants from previous challenges can mentor and guide newcomers, sharing their valuable insights and expertise. Moreover, we aim to cultivate a heightened interest in economics among UConn Stamford students by providing resources, organizing events, and facilitating discussions that delve into economic research and policy. Ultimately, the club endeavors to strengthen and expand the economics community at UConn Stamford by offering a platform for students to engage, learn, debate, and contribute to the field of economics.

Overall, the Economics Practicum has been a transformative part of my academic journey. We thank Dr. Natalia Smirnova for her assistance in making all of these achievements possible, and for encouraging our team to expand our experience and comprehension in Money and Banking, economic research, and monetary policy implementation.