



NEWSLETTER

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MINNESOTA SENATE INTRODUCES BILL TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' SPENDING HABITS - BROOKE HEATH

Recently, a bill was introduced to the Minnesota Senate that would require incoming college freshmen to enroll in a personal finance course during their orientation.

Introduced by Steve Dille (R-Dassel), S.F. 1264 would insist that Minnesota state colleges and universities offer students this crash course in personal finance in hopes of improving students' spending habits. The course, according to the Minnesota Senate, would provide students with information and skills training in personal financial management, including the responsible use of consumer credit. However, the requirement may be waived for students who enroll in courses that provide similar information.

The introduction of this bill is a response to the growing fear that the combination of tuition

increases and student spending behaviors will yield excessive debt. And statistics show that there is cause for this fear.

According to Higher Education Washington, Inc.'s *NewsLine*, the Minnesota Office of Higher Education reports that full-time students in 2004 borrowed an average of \$6,600 a year for college. If a student is pursuing a four-year degree, the charges can add up pretty quickly, and costs are even higher for students attending graduate school. In addition, during the same year, the average U.S. college student carried a credit-card balance of \$2,169.

According to the *Star Tribune*, Dille said he was shocked to learn that some of his residents will graduate with \$55,000 in loan debt.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE REQUIRES STUDENTS TO LEARN ONLINE - BROOKE HEATH

In an effort to help its students become well-rounded and better prepared to enter the workforce, Northwest State Community College in Archbold, OH, will require that all students take at least one online course prior to graduating.

Faculty and staff at the college feel that implementing this plan will help students to develop independent research and discovery skills, which they claim are important to potential employers.

According to Inside Higher Ed, the college's chief learning officer, Linda Carr, said, "Businesses are moving toward online training, and students have to learn to be self-motivated. In the workplace, you are responsible for doing what you need to do on your own time."

The school's administration and trustees support online education so much, in fact, that over the next few years, they hope to give students the

option of taking any class the school has to offer online. They plan to design each course so that students have the option to take it online or in person.

"Ultimately, almost all courses will be available via an online mode," Carr said. "It's a chance for us to teach [students] important skills. In this day and age, it's not a luxury to go online."

Currently, students may choose from among the many business, engineering, and general education classes already offered online to fulfill this new requirement. There is no limit to how many credit hours students may take, and a student can complete the online requirement by taking a class on any subject.

Northwest State Community College's new approach is catching on. According to Diana G. Oblinger, Vice President of EDUCAUSE, other institutions are becoming interested in adapting the community college's program for

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their own schools and requiring their students to engage in online learning in some form.

"It's a recognition that people are going to have to take charge of their educations," Oblinger said. "Putting this directly in

the path of students means if they are not used to independent learning, they can get help while in a structured environment rather than leaving it to chance at work."

The school's online requirement will be implemented as part of the curriculum beginning this fall.

NEWS IN BRIEF

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE TUITION TO INCREASE AGAIN

Tuition rates in Kentucky are set to rise. The Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education has approved tuition increases ranging from \$180 to \$618 dollars for public universities. Effective beginning with the 2007-2008 academic year, the increases will affect several institutions, including the University of Louisville. The college's trustees have approved a 9.9% tuition hike. This raises tuition for in-state undergraduates by \$309 per semester, to \$3,435. The increase will help the university hire new faculty members, augment scholarships, improve academic programs, and account for increasing health-insurance and utility expenses. The University of Louisville has seen 9%-or-greater increases in tuition for the past five years.

DON DAVIS NAMED UT'S ACTING DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL AID

The University of Texas has named Don Davis as its acting director of financial aid. Davis, who is currently serving as Associate Director of the Office of Student Financial Services, will now oversee the day-to-day functions and administration of the office. The move comes as a result of paid leave given to Lawrence Burt, the office's associate vice president and director. Burt's paid leave was required on account of investigations alleging conflicts of interest.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY ALUMNUS DONATES \$400 MILLION IN FINANCIAL AID

A 92-year-old graduate from Columbia University, John Kluge, has announced he will donate \$400 million to the institution's financial aid program. The funds will be received upon his death.

\$200 million is slated to be utilized for supporting and expanding existing undergraduate financial aid programs.

The other half will reportedly be used for graduate scholarships and fellowships. Between 1987 and 1993, Kluge donated more than \$110 million to the university, primarily to help undergraduates from disadvantaged backgrounds. Known as a mogul of the television industry, Kluge earned his B.A. in Economics from Columbia University in 1937. The huge amount is expected to contribute significantly to the university's aid programs and also give it an edge on competing institutions. Ironically, the university has received the good news at a time when its financial aid officer is involved in an alleged student loan scandal.

OREGON PROPOSES BILL TO EXPAND FINANCIAL AID

The Oregon Senate has unanimously approved a bill that increases the state's grants for working- and middle-class students attending college. Senate Bill 334 proposes that students who contribute portions of their tuition costs be provided with state assistance if family income and federal grants do not suffice. Students will have to come up with the money they earn by working 40 hours per week during the summer and 10 to 15 hours per week during school sessions. A student attending Oregon Community College would have to contribute \$5,200 per year, while an Oregon State University or private-college student would need to contribute \$7,950. If passed by the state's house, the new legislation would increase the average state grant from \$1,200 per student to approximately \$2,100 per student.