

Managing Money in College and Beyond Goodmoneyhabits.com Integrated into University Core Curriculum, Teaches Students to Manage Finances, Reduce Debt

JOPLIN, Mo., February 5, 2008-- Their parents weren't required to take a personal finance class to graduate from college. But their parents didn't have more than \$20,000 in debt, on average, at graduation. And nearly half of their parents' generation didn't default on loans, have cars repossessed, or file bankruptcy in their 20s. So today's students at Missouri Southern State University (<http://www.mssu.edu/>) must complete a course that teaches them to manage their money.

Last semester MSSU's Robert W. Plaster School of Business Administration incorporated a money management program, Goodmoneyhabits.com, (<http://www.goodmoneyhabits.com/>) into the curriculum of the economics core course. The responses were so positive that beginning this semester, regardless of their major, all MSSU students must study money management modules in addition to English composition, literature and other core requirements.

James Gray, (<http://www.mssu.edu/business/Templates/Vitas/Gray%20VITA.pdf>) professor of management in The Robert W. Plaster School of Business, said the school has taken responsibility to prepare graduates to manage their money. "One of the major obstacles facing college students today is rising debt caused by educational costs and credit cards. Students are bombarded with credit card opportunities, even in the student union. Most students need additional knowledge to manage their finances," he said.

In the past, only business majors at MSSU took classes that included personal financial management. But when last semester's Economics 180 classes added Goodmoneyhabits.com's online money management program to its content, both students and professors outside of the School of Business were pleased. "This semester, for the first time, I saw lights coming on as students realized that their credit card debts will take a long time to pay off. Maybe they won't use those credit cards again," Gray said. "Personal finance is something we can all use. It teaches students to think with facts, not with emotion," he said.

Goodmoneyhabits.com offers practical money management skills through interactive financial planning exercises and real life scenarios. "We're overwhelmed with the students' glowing reviews," Gray said. "They learned to set goals, create a budget, and plan their expenses, including ultimate retirement." When reviewing the program, students said the information was informative in planning their future and helped them understand Social Security, 401(k) plans, and investing, as well as the cost of credit and the necessity of budgeting.

Susan Windham is chief executive of The EDSA Group (<http://www.theedsagroup.com/>), developer of Goodmoneyhabits.com. She says it was created to help adults of all ages, from students to retirees, manage their personal finances. "Lack of financial management skills has a real impact on our economy," said Windham. "For college students and recent graduates, as well as the population at large, the cost of debt is forcing many to forego or delay saving for retirement, getting married, buying homes and putting aside money for their own children's educations."

"The personal money management skills students learn through Goodmoneyhabits.com will make them more attractive to their employers," said Gray. More than 50 percent of workers today are living paycheck to paycheck, and 69 percent of those are concerned with paying monthly bills. Workers cite financial problems as their most frequent cause of stress. "The program offers affordable online lessons in reducing debt, setting financial goals, budgeting, maximizing company benefits, and investing in 401(k) plans," said Windham. "Users tell us Goodmoneyhabits.com changes their lives," she said.

ABOUT MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY

Missouri Southern State University (<http://www.mssu.edu/>), located in Joplin, Missouri, is a state-supported, comprehensive university offering programs leading to the bachelor's degree and to selective collaborative master's degrees. MSSU is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA).

ABOUT THE EDSA GROUP

The EDSA Group (<http://www.theedsagroup.com>), headquartered in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, is a national leader in workplace financial education. The EDSA Group offers live workshops, one-on-one educational meetings, and an online financial education program, Goodmoneyhabits.com, for individuals who want to make informed decisions about their personal finances.

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