

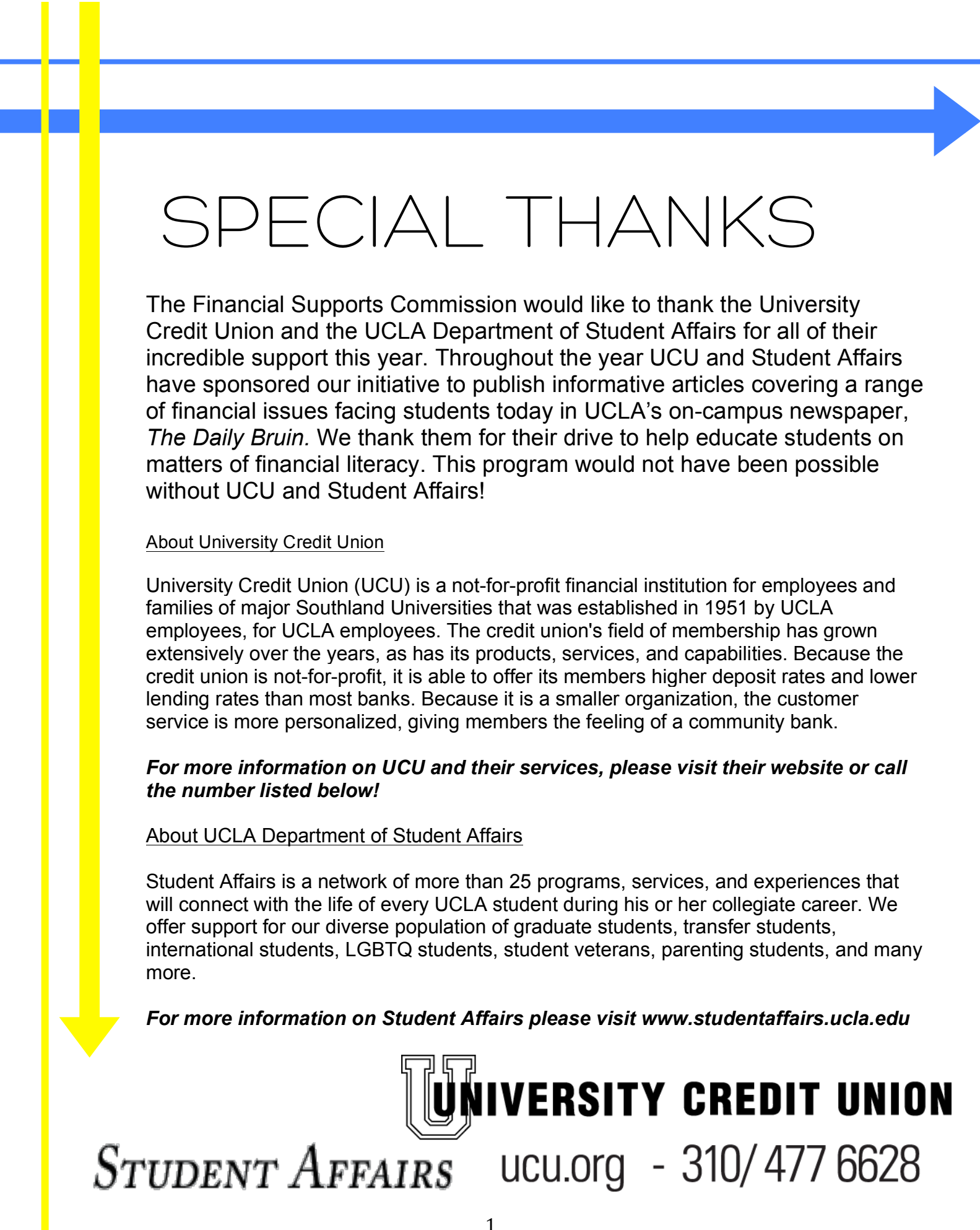
GUIDE TO MAKING EVERY DOLLAR

USAC
FINANCIAL
SUPPORTS
COMMISSION



COUNT.





SPECIAL THANKS

The Financial Supports Commission would like to thank the University Credit Union and the UCLA Department of Student Affairs for all of their incredible support this year. Throughout the year UCU and Student Affairs have sponsored our initiative to publish informative articles covering a range of financial issues facing students today in UCLA's on-campus newspaper, *The Daily Bruin*. We thank them for their drive to help educate students on matters of financial literacy. This program would not have been possible without UCU and Student Affairs!

About University Credit Union

University Credit Union (UCU) is a not-for-profit financial institution for employees and families of major Southland Universities that was established in 1951 by UCLA employees, for UCLA employees. The credit union's field of membership has grown extensively over the years, as has its products, services, and capabilities. Because the credit union is not-for-profit, it is able to offer its members higher deposit rates and lower lending rates than most banks. Because it is a smaller organization, the customer service is more personalized, giving members the feeling of a community bank.

For more information on UCU and their services, please visit their website or call the number listed below!

About UCLA Department of Student Affairs

Student Affairs is a network of more than 25 programs, services, and experiences that will connect with the life of every UCLA student during his or her collegiate career. We offer support for our diverse population of graduate students, transfer students, international students, LGBTQ students, student veterans, parenting students, and many more.

For more information on Student Affairs please visit www.studentaffairs.ucla.edu

 **UNIVERSITY CREDIT UNION**
STUDENT AFFAIRS ucu.org - 310/477 6628



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Budgeting, Saving, and Spending Wisely

How to Build a Budget: 8 Steps to Increasing Your Financial Prowess
By Rebekah Livermore, *Page 4*

Setting Up an Emergency Fund: How to Establish A Financial Cushion
By Batul Joffrey, *Page 6*

Budgeting for Food: When Ramen Just Doesn't Cut It
By Amy Heng, *Page 8*

Thriftology: Your Guide to Financially Smart Tech Purchases
By Kareem Dakak, *Page 10*

Creating a Holiday Budget:
By Emma Persson, *Page 12*

Studying Abroad: Have the Trip of a Lifetime Without Paying For A Lifetime
By Emma Persson, *Page 14*

Banking

Types of Bank Fees
By Randy Yu, *Page 16*

Where to Stash Your Cash: Types of Bank Accounts
By Emma Persson, *Page 18*

Student Loans:

Federal Loans
By Rebekah Livermore, *Page 20*

Private Loans
By Batul Joffrey, *Page 22*

What To Do If You Can't Pay: Options At The
By Kareem Dakak, *Page 24*

Getting out of Debt 101
By Valentia Angelin, *Page 27*

Credit Scores and Credit Cards:

Now and Forever: Your Relationship With Your Credit Score
By Rebekah Livernmore, *Page 29*

Your First Credit Card: A How-To Guide
By Kareem Dakak, *Page 31*

Good Credit Card Habits for the College Student: Your Guide to Swiping Responsibly
By Amy Heng, , *Page 33*

Identity Theft
By Valentia Angelin, *Page 35*

Necessary Costs of Life:

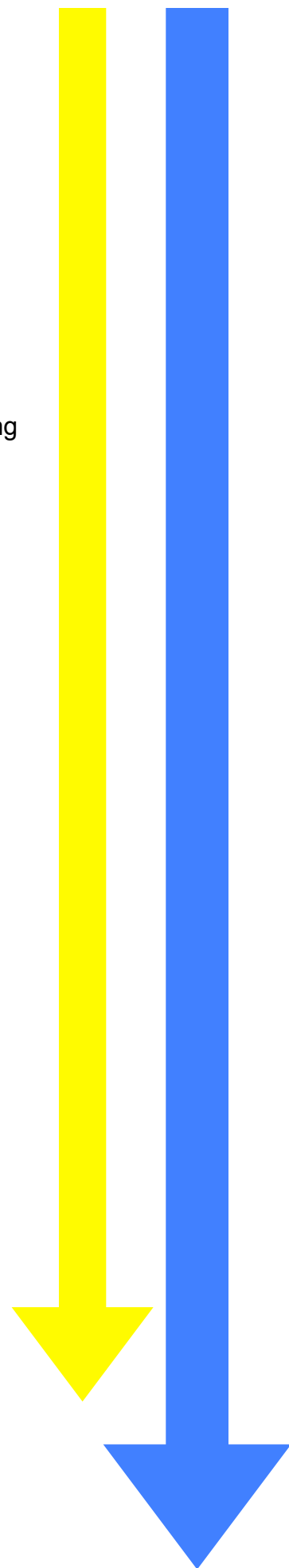
On-Campus Housing
By Emma Persson, *Page 38*

A Student's Guide to Taxes
By Amy Heng, *Page 40*

Transportation Alternatives: No Car? No Problem
By Kareem Dakak, *Page 42*

Planning for Your Retirement: How You Can Prepare for Your Future Even As a Student
By Valentia Angelin, *Page 44*

Resources on Campus
By Valentia Angelin, *Page 47*



How to Build A Budget: 8 Steps to Increasing Your Financial Prowess

By Rebekah Livermore

Do you know how much money you spend every month? If you're like most college students, keeping track of expenses is probably not one of your favorite activities. However, building and sticking to a budget is an important step in managing your finances, both as a college student and for life after you graduate. There is no one-size-fits-all budget, and it is important to update your budget whenever your income and/or expenses change. However, here are some universal tips on how to get started:

Note: Budgets can be made for any time period, but it is often easiest to make a monthly budget. Your budget can be altered accordingly based on your situation.

Steps in Building A Budget:
Consider ALL your sources of income. Income can be anything from wages from a job or parental or relative support. Your income might change from month to month. If this happens, you will need to adjust your budget.

Consider Regular Expenses. This varies from person to person, but it is important to write down the costs of all known expenses. This can include tuition, transportation, rent, food, insurance – anything you are responsible for paying.

Budget Allocated Spending Money. This is money that you are not required to spend each month, in

contrast to fixed expenses such as rent. This is the easiest category to go overboard. Set a designated amount for how much you can afford to spend on unnecessary items. If money is tight, this is the best category to reduce expenses.

Keep a Spending Diary. This will help keep track of where exactly all your money goes. By doing so, you can see how you used your money and evaluate areas in which you can improve.

Commit to SAVING. Saving can be especially challenging for college students living on a tight budget. Despite this, it is a crucial step in improving your financial decisions, and is a good practice to start as early as possible. Commit to saving a set amount each month. Over time, it can make a significant difference.

Pay off Loans and Credit Card Debt. These can be thought of as “expenses,” but they deserve to be in their own category because these payments can be easy to skimp on. You might not be required to pay these off each month, and it can be tempting to postpone such payments. However, paying off debt early and consistently reduces the amount of interest you will end up paying overall.

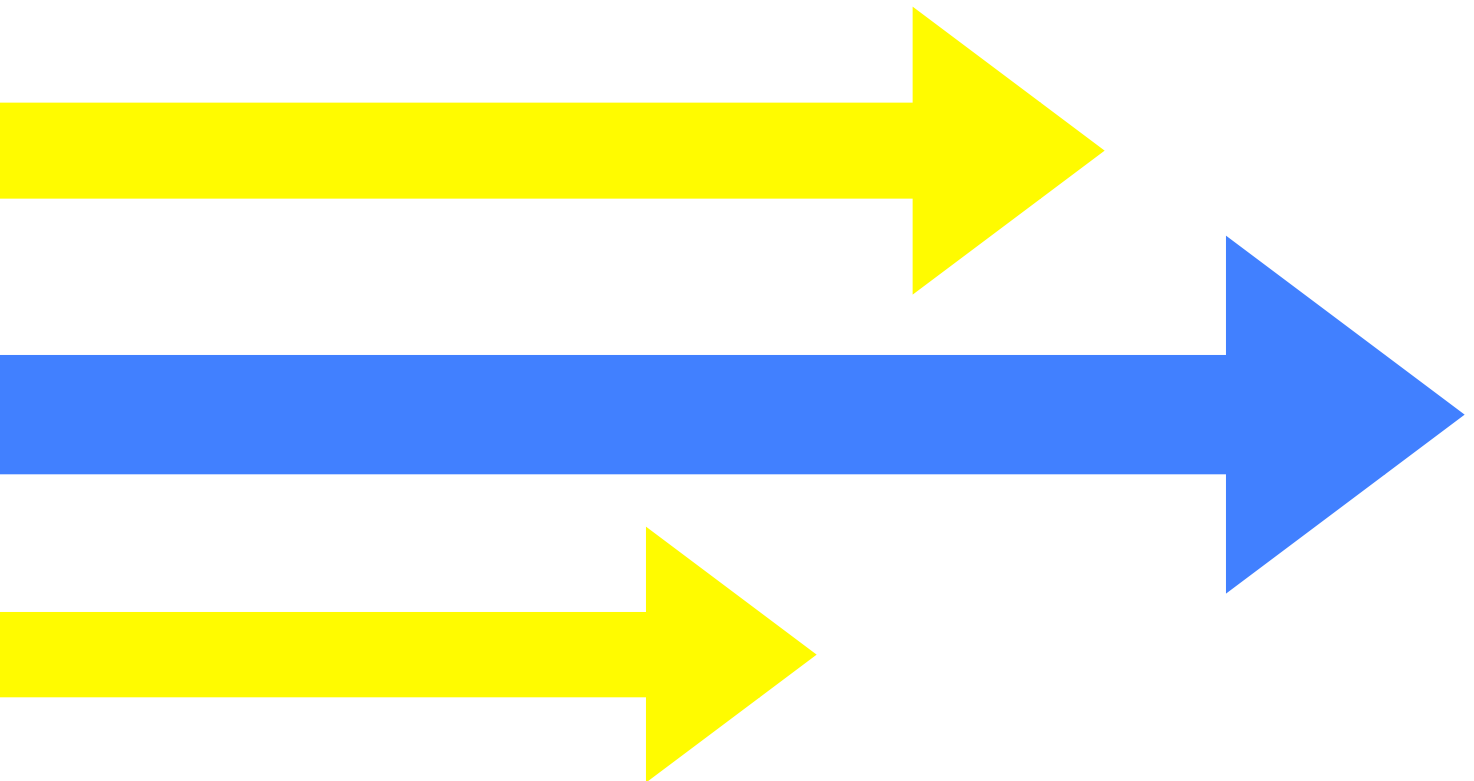
Build an Emergency Fund. An emergency fund is money you have saved up in case anything happens to your source of income or if unforeseen expenses pop up (such as health problems and related bills, loss of a job, a car accident, etc.) While you may not be able to contribute a huge amount of money towards such a fund, regularly contributing what you can afford will make a significant difference if

something unpredictable occurs and you need money on short notice.

Update Your Budget. The budget you make one month will probably not be applicable if your income and expenses change the next month. Update your budget regularly to make sure you are always making sound financial decisions based on your current monetary situation.

Looking For Tools to Help You Budget?

Visit the Student Loan Services & Collections website at www.loans.ucla.edu and click on the “Money and You” link for more help. Additionally, the University Credit Union has a Money Management Planner at <https://www.balancepro.net/pdf/MP.pdf>.



Setting Up An Emergency Fund: How To Establish a Financial Cushion

By Batul Joffrey

As college students, most of us do not have a lot of money to set aside. However, it is extremely important to establish an emergency fund so you can deal with unexpected situations without severely harming your financial life. Tuition, living expenses, and unpredictable events, such as car repairs, broken computers, sickness, related medical bills, financial aid problems, and job loss are just a few things that can rock your financial boat. Starting an emergency fund can be the first step to making sure you have the necessary funds to deal with costly, unanticipated events.

But how? Below are five steps to creating a successful emergency fund.

Step 1: Decide how much you would like to put in the fund. This will vary depending on your ability to contribute, but the amount should be enough to keep you going for a reasonable amount of time should additional expenses crop up. A common recommendation by financial advisors is to keep at least 6 months' living expenses in the fund. This amount will give you a short cushion in case you lose your job, have an accident, or suddenly need money. It is important to put money back into your emergency fund as soon as you are stable again. It takes dedication and self-

control to set a significant amount of money aside (and keep from spending it on unnecessary items), but doing so now can help you significantly in the future.

Step 2: Calculate your monthly expenses. Making a list of your regular monthly expenses - housing costs, utilities, food, transportation costs, debt repayments, etc. - is a helpful way to gauge your budget. Using budget building worksheets are also a helpful way to visualize your expenses. After totaling this amount, multiply it by the number of months you chose in Step 1. This is the figure that you will need to set aside in your emergency fund.

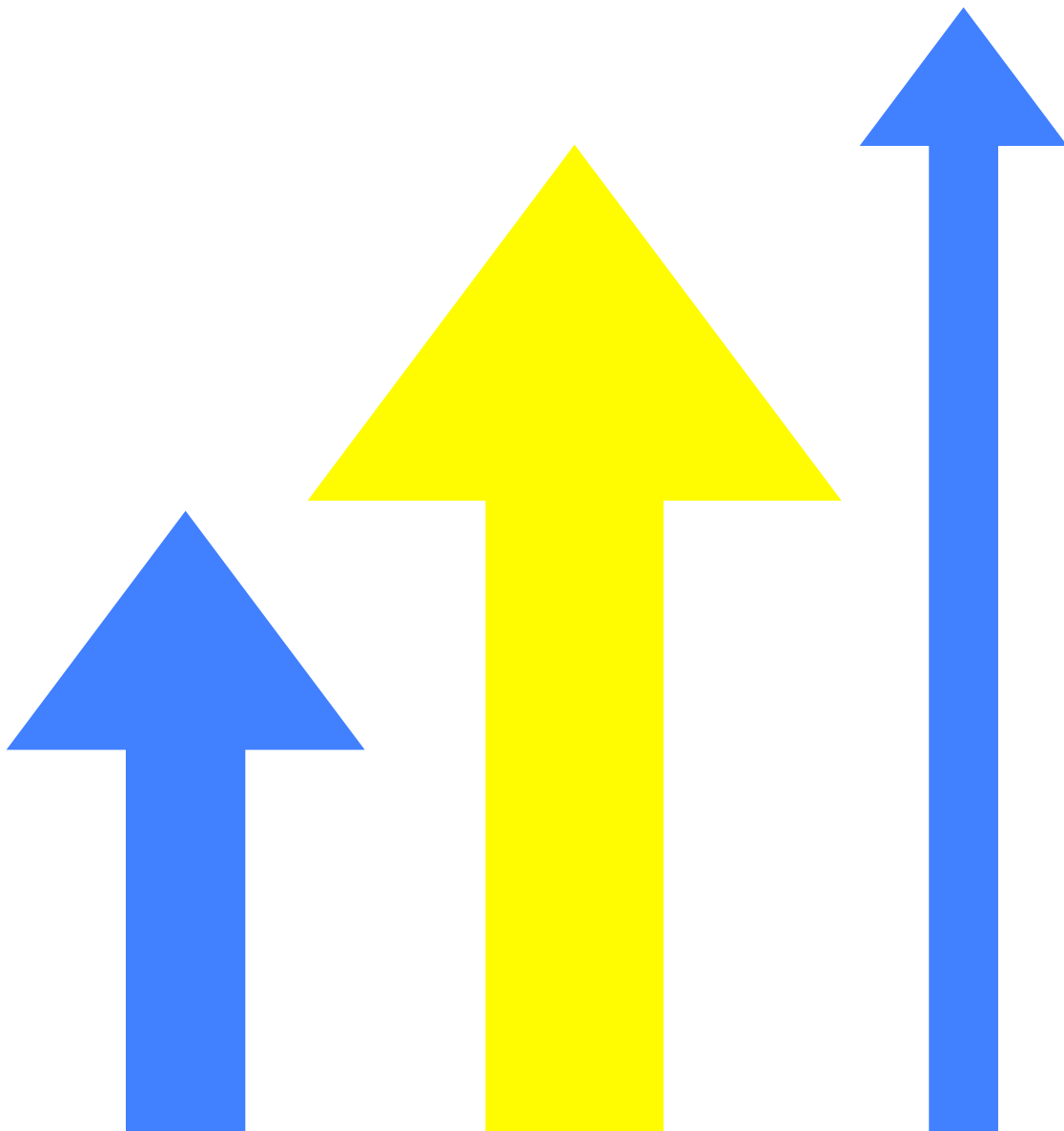
Step 3: Open an account. After determining how much you need to save, the next step is deciding where to keep this money. Because you want your emergency fund to be quickly accessible, you will want to open an account that will give you the liquidity that you desire - such as a savings account. With this type of account, you will also be earning interest on your money.

Step 4: Determine how much you can afford to save monthly and set up automatic deposits. It might take quite a while to build up your emergency fund and achieve the number you wish to ultimately save. Determine how much is reasonable to put towards the emergency fund each month. This may require looking back at your budget and going over your finances again. A good rule of thumb is

including in your monthly budget the amount of money you should put in your fund. Setting a specific number and always including it in your budget can help ensure you are regularly contributing what you can to this fund. Additionally, saving can be made easier by scheduling automatic deposits to the fund monthly.

Step 5. Find ways to increase your savings efforts. It is important to examine

your budget on a regular basis to make sure you are saving responsibly. When keeping a budget, it is important to write down all your expenditures (including small purchases, such as movie tickets, food, entertainment, and shopping expenses), so you can easily keep track of where all your money is going. This will also help you realize where you can cut expenses, therefore freeing up more money you can allocate to savings.



Budgeting for Food: When Ramen Just Doesn't Cut It

By Amy Heng

Food is an undeniable aspect of our life. Throughout your four years here at UCLA you will not only experience the delicious dining options on campus but also work your way around Los Angeles' amazing eateries. However, as students we have to keep in mind that just like shopping, the cost of food has to come somewhere. If not budgeted correctly, you may be spending more than you afford to.

The price of food, whether it's groceries for the week or dinner for the night, can be more costly than it is at filling you up. Fortunately, there are small gems hidden all around Los Angeles that taste as good as a four or five star restaurant but without denting our wallets.

Not all meal plans are created equal. As a resident living in the dorms, your housing payment includes your selected meal plan. The choice of your meal plan should depend on how often you stay at UCLA especially on weekends during the quarter, whether or not you are willing to swipe your friends into dining halls, and the price you are willing to pay per quarter with your housing option. Changing a meal plan has a \$25 fee.

If you live close to UCLA and go home almost every weekend or like

to eat out often, an 11 or 14 Regular plan may be best for you. The 11 R meal plan is viable for two meals per day during weekdays and one during weekends. Although this plan does not roll over onto the next week, you are allowed to swipe multiple times at B-Café and Late Nite. Living in a triple in a classic residential hall will set you back about \$10,800 per year, which is the cheapest option.

However if you tend to eat at least 3 meals a day or enjoy being generous towards non-residential peers, a 19 or 14 Premier plan may be best for you. These plans allows you to swipe multiple times in one day as well as rolling over swipes onto the next week if you didn't use it all up. Living in a single room in a plaza with a non-shared bathroom with 19 P will set you back \$18,500 a year, which is the most expensive option.

To maximize your money as well as satisfy your eating habits, 19 Regular will cost you less than 14 Premier.

Hope is not lost for non-residential students. You are still able to dine at the amazing facilities so long as you're willing to pay. Students have the option of adding money to their Bruin Cards online or selecting a non-resident meal plan. These meal plans are similar to regular meal plans because they do not roll over. Non-residents are allowed to choose between a 14, 11, 5, or 3 swipes per week plan. A 14 swipes per week plan will set you back \$1,500 per quarter, while a 3 swipes per week plan will set you back \$350 per quarter.

For students who are looking for alternatives to UCLA dining facilities, budgeting money should become a priority. When we pay upfront for meal plans, we forget that it cost us money. But we can also easily forget how much it adds up when we pay each time. **Here are good ways to help budget your food spending:**

- **Opt for a la carte.** You'll receive the entrée but without a fountain drink; just ask for a cup of water, which is always free.
- **Before ordering, check Yelp or Foursquare.** Usually restaurants will offer you special deals when you check-in online such as a free drink, appetizer, or something better.
- **Split a meal with a friend.** Some places will offer big servings; just check their Yelp page first for pictures.
- **Save some for lunch the next day.** Whenever you can split a meal with a friend, split it with yourself later on and save a couple of dollars by eating left overs.

For the adventurous Bruin who's tired of dining hall food and need a couple of places to explore, here are some of my favorite stops:

- Daikokuya Ramen – on the corner of Olympic Blvd and Sawtelle Blvd – The signature bowl is only \$8.95.
- El Chato Taco Truck – on the corner of Olympic Blvd and S. La Brea Blvd – It's a late night \$1 taco truck, open between 9:30 – 1:30am on weekdays and 9:30 – 3:30am on weekends.
- Komodo Café – on the corner of Robertson Blvd and Pico Blvd – This Asian/Mexican/Ethnic fusion place a must-eat! Definitely try the truffle fries with your order.
- Big Tomy's – on the corner of Pico Blvd and Sawtelle Blvd – A cash only spot with amazing old-fashioned American grub.
- Lemonade – on the corner of Abbot Kinney Blvd and Venice Blvd – A place known for its various lemonade flavors, but also a great place to get a bite to eat.
- Sunny Blue – on the corner of Main St and Hill St in Santa Monica – For between \$2-\$5 you can get a handmade, freshly cooked omusubi, or rice ball, made with delicious meat (or vegetables).

Thriftology: Your Guide to Financially Smart Technology Purchases

By Kareem Dakak

One of the most exciting aspects of college is a shiny new laptop or tablet (or both), advertised by technology companies as necessities worth spending thousands of dollars on. Technology is indeed helpful in school, but it is also expensive. Laptops can quickly get expensive when buying a new design or adding features. Then there are tablets, the convenient tools that allow students to easily play games in class while pretending to take notes. The final part of a complete college student's life is a smartphone, which are considerable financial burdens. Follow this guide to get important technology without breaking the bank.

The Laptop:

The hallmark of a college student is a laptop. The machines are highly versatile, often needed for projects varying from essays to coding assignments. They come in various shapes and sizes, as well as prices. Focus on what features you need, especially if your major requires specific computer programs, in order to buy a suitable laptop. Here is a list of important steps you should take before buying:

Ask yourself many questions. For example, "would I take lecture notes on my laptop?" If you would, then weight and form factor will be important. The Macbook Air and various Windows Ultrabooks will help

in this department, but are often the most expensive laptops.

Use student discounts. Simply entering a manufacturer's education store online will take hundreds of dollars off price tags. This also applies to software such as Microsoft Office. Never settle for an expensive purchase; first check if there is a student discount.

Consider last-year models

High-end laptops (yes, even MacBooks) should never require you to consider selling organs. If you are set on a certain brand, research the month during which the manufacturer typically updates its models. There will be deep discounts on the outgoing laptops, and the difference in performance may not be significant.

Buy Refurbished: Most manufacturers sell refurbished models online, which are significantly cheaper than their non-refurbished counterparts. Remember that refurbished computers are not used; they merely did not pass initial inspection upon manufacture. Apple sells refurbished computers with the same warranties as new models, and the same policy applies to some Windows PC manufacturers.

The Tablet:

One of the most exciting new developments in the technological world is the tablet. They are light, convenient, and easy to use. However, they may be unnecessary financial burdens. Be careful and do not let a small device be the source of regret.

Avoid mobile data plans. Gleeful salesmen at Sprint, Verizon, and other mobile carrier stores will insist that you need mobile data for

your tablet. Consider the fact that you live at or near a major university, with free Wi-Fi everywhere. Mobile data is very expensive (often around \$30/month) and is usually not necessary

Consider previous models

Yes, the iPad Air is lighter than the previous iPad. But it is also much more expensive. Apple, Microsoft, and other manufacturers will often continue selling previous models of tablets at discounted prices.

Make sure you need it

Tablets cost hundreds of dollars and should be suited for a purpose (notes, design, etc.). Do not focus on memory, as small upgrades in memory translate into hundreds of dollars. Simply back data up to your laptop or the Internet using free storage apps such as Dropbox.

The Phone:

Most college students who have cell phones use smartphones, which are famously nice and infamously expensive. However, attending college significantly changes the usually hopeless financial situations associated with smartphones.

Big Carriers

You will most likely gravitate towards one of the large carriers-Sprint,

Verizon, T-Mobile and the like-when purchasing a smartphone. If you stay on your parents' family plan, there is nothing much to be done. However, individual plans are often very expensive with the larger carriers.

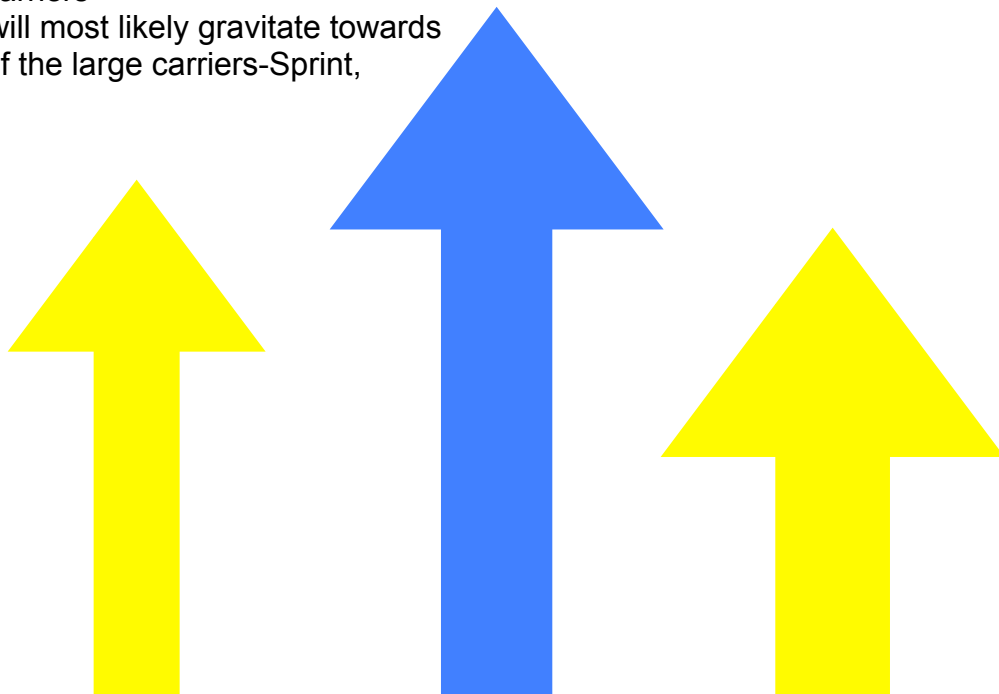
Minimize costs by foregoing a texting plan, using apps such as WhatsApp to communicate. You will only need a data plan, which itself can be reduced in cost due to the prevalence of Wi-Fi around campus.

Pre-paid

Pre-paid phones are often inexpensive, as are the plans they go along with. Trac-fone and Virgin Mobile are only two of the many options in this market. For smartphones, consider Google's Nexus line. The phones are unlocked and highly powerful, allowing you to enjoy top-tier smartphones without depending on large carriers.

With all this in mind, make holiday technology purchases carefully.

Remember that even cash-strapped college students can enjoy the newest technological advances if they do their homework right.



Holiday Spending for Student Budgets

By Emma Persson

The holiday season is a time of year characterized by lavish presents, over-the-top decor, and ugly Christmas-sweater-themed parties. So how do you manage your spending habits during the most expensive time of year? Below is a list of tips created which to allow college students to enjoy every aspect of the holiday season without getting a financial hangover.

Tip #1: Create a Reasonable Budget

Every year we allow the holidays to sneak up on us, giving little thought to the expenses that are behind it. Therefore, it is wise to start creating a spending budget for the winter season earlier on in the year, possibly during fall. This way you can plan out your own savings strategy, and allow yourself to put away more money to spend on the gifts you want to get your friends and family. You know that \$3.00 latte you like to buy on your way to class every morning? Try bringing your own coffee from home in a mug instead so that you can save up quicker. Think to yourself: what is a reasonable budget for you so that you can still afford rent and food, while saving money at the same time?

Tip #2: Cash not Card

When you use your credit or debit card it is easy to get carried away. Oftentimes you find your eye wandering from window to window in your neighborhood mall, and the next thing you know you get sucked

in to purchasing unnecessary gifts. By using cash, it is easier to keep track of your spending habits because your money is more tangible. If you have a set budget for a given month or a particular shopping spree, then take out the allotted amount that you have agreed to spend from an ATM and leave your credit card at home. This way, you aren't tempted to go over budget.

Tip #3: Naughty or Nice

Recognize the fact that you can't buy presents for everybody, that's Santa's job. Therefore, it is important to make a list of the people that are really important to you so you know who to buy presents for beforehand. Don't go buying your neighbor's best friend a brand new Michael Kors watch, for example, not a good idea. Instead, buy inexpensive but meaningful gifts for your family members and closest friends, and leave the rest to your excellent baking skills, for example. Be creative. Which leads to. . . . Wrapped Christmas cookies are a cheap and easy gift to give to people who you still want to receive something special.

Tip #4: It's the Thought that Counts

The amount of money you spend on a gift, the brand name, or the store from which it came from, is not important when it comes to purchasing presents during the holiday season. Instead, focus on buying something inexpensive, yet meaningful to the recipient. Oftentimes the best idea can even be a picture inside a lovely picture frame. So instead of going after that

new iPhone, or an adorable Kate Spade purse, try something more reasonable like a potted plant, nice stationary, or a cute coffee mug. Don't be afraid to get creative.

Tip #5: Time not Money

People can easily get carried away with the materialistic aspect of the holidays. It is important to recognize that many times the best gift you can give someone is just your time alone. We are all college students, most of whom live away from home and have busy schedules. So take your grandma out to lunch, go on a hike with your mom, or spend an afternoon with your dad. Don't let all the holiday commercials and marketing ploys

get to you.

To Sum Up

- Make a budget, and stick to it.
- Don't get carried away on buying presents for everybody; it's just not possible.
- Buy gifts that are personalized and not expensive.
- Clip some coupons and look for discounts when possible.
- Spending time with someone is oftentimes valued more than an actual present. Remember that.



Studying Abroad: Have the Trip of a Lifetime Without Paying For A Lifetime

By Emma Persson

Are you an undergraduate student looking to study abroad during the summer? How about the whole school year? There are several important questions and factors a student should consider when thinking over going abroad. This article will answer several basic questions regarding how to fund and manage a budget for your time abroad.

Financial Aid

Financial aid for studying abroad typically consists of federal grants and loans or private loans. A good idea would be to consult your financial aid advisor or study abroad counselor to find out more options to your specific situation.

What about Private Scholarships and Loans?

There are many types of private scholarships that range from merit-based, to student-specific, destination-specific, program and subject specific. Consult your counselor for more specific lists of organizations that can provide you with scholarships for your program, or consult the UCLA Scholarship Resource Center database: http://www.ugeducation.ucla.edu/src/Scholarship_Search.html Another good resource to consult for more scholarship options can be found on the UCLA International Education office website and at the UCEAP webpage, some of which can be summed up in the chart

below: <http://www.ieo.ucla.edu/scholarships.htm>

Private Loans: You and your parents can also apply for private loans through banks and other organizations. The benefit of private loans is that they can pay for things like airfare and other cultural excursions; also interest from student loans is tax deductible.

How to Budget Abroad

There are many factors you should consider when establishing a budget for your time abroad. Make a list and group them together so you can get a better estimate of what you will be spending on a daily basis. Some expenses include:

Travel fees: airfare, transportation (cabs, public transport), visa, and passport

Living expenses: housing (university housing, apartments, or hotels and hostels), meals (groceries and eating out)

Program fees: cost of actual abroad program, application fee

Personal fees: entertainment, shopping, souvenirs, cell phone, Internet

Health fees: immunizations, insurance

Other things to keep in mind are:

Exchange rate: You can check what the exchange rate will be for your country of destination. Always keep in mind that changing over money from US dollars to any other currency will cost a fee, as well as

withdrawing money from ATMs abroad using an American debit card.

Call Your Bank: It is important to let your bank know your country(s) of destination so that they don't assume fraud when you use your debit and/or credit card abroad, and to make sure they operate properly using foreign ATMs.

Other Traveling Tips/Advice

Safety: It's always better to travel in groups or with a friend and not alone. Be aware of your surroundings and always hide away or lock up your expensive personal items (i.e. Passport!)

Eating Out: Eating at restaurants abroad can get very expensive, especially in Europe. Something to keep in mind is that tip is oftentimes included in the bill, and not needed to be added on top of the total cost of the meal.

Always keep a decent amount of cash, credit or debit card, insurance card, and passport with you at all times while traveling.



How To Avoid Extra Bank Fees

By Randy Yu

Have you ever looked at your banking statement and saw a charge you did not recognize? This could be the result of a bank fee. Added fees can be irritating and troublesome, but maybe avoidable.

What are bank fees?

Bank fees are charges for various services and reasons such as withdrawing more money than your account has or monthly/annual fees. All fees are disclosed in a Fee chart or other product form. It is illegal to charge a fee that is not disclosed. However, 5 sneaky and annoying banking fees are¹:

1.) **Overdraft fee** – An overdraft occurs when money is withdrawn from a bank account resulting in the balance going below zero.

2.) **Nonsufficient funds** - If you use all the money in your account, and you don't have an overdraft account, your check will bounce back to the merchant. If a check bounces, you'll be charged a nonsufficient funds (NSF) fee.

3.) **Minimum Balance Fee** - If you have an account that

requires a minimum balance, the agreement with the bank explains how the balance is calculated and what fees you'll be charged pay if you fall below it.

4.) **ATM Fees** - If you're using an ATM operated by the bank with your account, the transaction may be inexpensive or free. Other ATM machines not owned by your bank can charge you for using their service.

More subtle fees that you may not know about include:

- 1.) Forgetting to update your address if you move
- 2.) Cashing in any extra coins
- 3.) Talking to a human teller when you are enrolled in e-banking (i.e. paperless statements)
- 4.) Losing your debit card
- 5.) Closing your account

Ways to Avoid Extra Banking Fees:

Although many fees are small, they can accumulate into a significant amount. Tips to avoid banking fees are:

1. **Get cash back when making a purchase** - Bundling a purchase and cash back at checkout will **save you the cost of an ATM transaction**, as well as save you time.

2. Balance your checking account – If you try to use more money than you have in your account, you'll be charged a non-sufficient funds fee by the bank. Worse, the business that accepted the check may charge you a returned check fee too. **If your financial institution has account alerts (e-mails or text), sign up for ones that tell you when your balance gets to a certain level.**

3. Look for an account that has reduced monthly fees - You may be able to get a Checking Account with no monthly fees or low monthly fees. If the account has low monthly fees, find out if the fee can be waived under certain conditions.

4. Sign up for electronic services - Web, mobile and

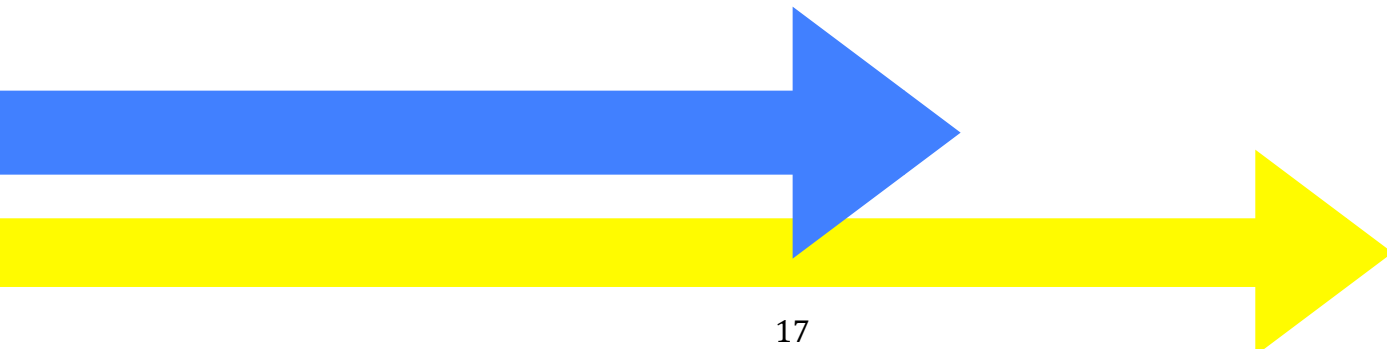
- 1.) <http://money.howstuffworks.com/personal-finance/banking/10-sneaky-banking-fees.htm#page=10>
- 2.) http://money.cnn.com/galleries/2011/pf/1106/gallery.annoying_fees/index.html
- 3.) <http://www.bankrate.com/finance/savings/8-great-ways-to-avoid-growing-bank-fees-1.aspx>
- 4.) <http://www.balancetrack.org/partners/universitycu/>

ATM banking may save you money, instead of using a teller at a bank branch.

What to do after you are charged:

Contact your bank to ask about the fee or and ask if you can get it waived. It is best to be polite when asking for the fee to be waived. Being a long time customer with a positive history (i.e. no prior fees or penalties) can also help. Finally, if you get these fees, maybe it's time to determine if you should change your financial management habits – even seek out some assistance from credit counselors. Many fees are avoidable with sound, predictable practices

For more information and tips on managing your banking accounts, check the links provided below:



Where to Stash Your Cash: The Main Types of Bank Accounts

By Emma Persson

There are five main types of bank accounts. These include:

Checking Accounts: A basic account that helps keep your money secure and where transactions can be made on a daily basis to help meet all your financial needs. With this type of account, people pay by using a debit card or by writing checks. Oftentimes, checking accounts offer different types of packages that can help reduce or waive monthly fees so it would be wise to consult with your bank and consider all your options.

Savings Accounts: An account where you can accumulate interest on money that you have put away to save for future use. Savings accounts also offer different interest rates and monthly fees, so be sure to research which option is best for you.

Certificate of Deposits (CDs): Accounts where you can invest money for a pre-set amount of

time with a specific interest rate. These interest rates are typically higher than those for regular savings accounts because the money you deposit is put away for a set period of time. Beware that early withdrawal of your money can oftentimes be accompanied by financial penalties.

Money Market Accounts: Accounts similar to regular savings accounts, except you have to maintain a higher balance in order to avoid a monthly fee. Unlike regular savings accounts, which have a fixed interest rate, money market accounts usually have varying interest rates depending on your balance. They oftentimes have more favorable rates for accounts with higher balances.

Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs): This type of bank account helps you save money towards your retirement. Usually people set up these types of accounts because they (1) either aren't offered retirement benefits from their employer or (2) they want to save more money

besides the plan their employer offers. There are several types to choose from, so be sure to consult your bank should you decide to set one up.

Are There Special Bank Accounts just for College Students?

Many banks offer student accounts for people who are attending college or university. Oftentimes these accounts feature unlimited debit transactions and no monthly service fees.

So, if you have yet to open an account, contact a branch today to set up your college checking account!

What Are the Pros and Cons of joining a Credit Union?

Credit unions are non-for-profit financial institutions that typically maintain local branches that operate much like a bank. Typically, benefits of joining a credit union include the fact that they offer higher interest rates and lower fees than for-profit banks. The downside, however, is that they possess certain eligibility requirements for membership, and it can sometimes be hard to find branches in foreign cities. Because of this, there can be

withdrawal fees from non-credit union ATMs.

References:

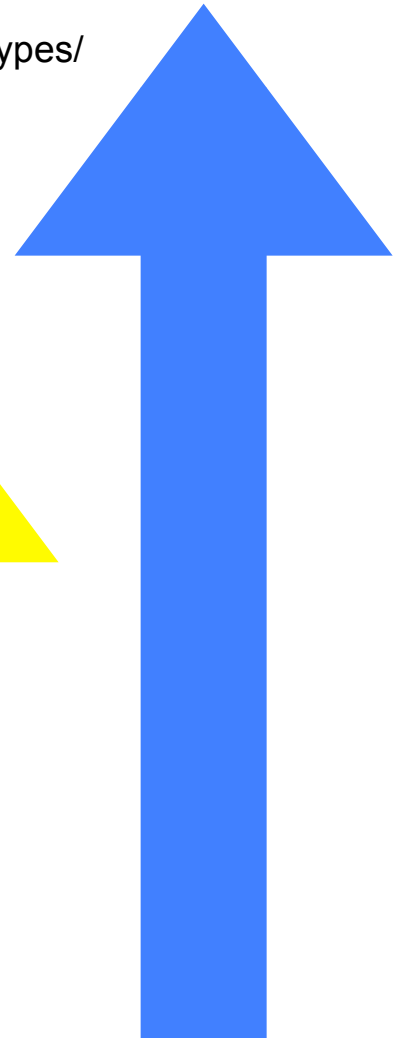
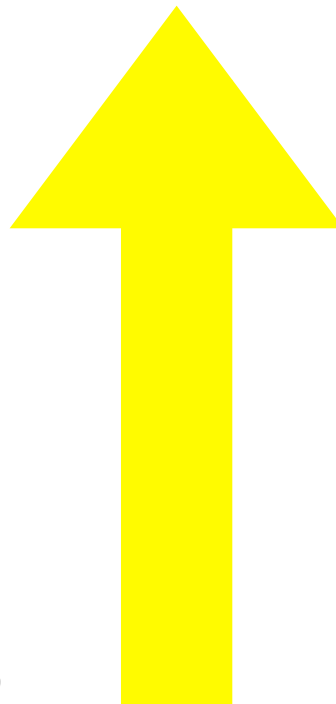
Black. Sierra. "Pros and Cons of Credit Unions". Forbes. Web. 28 October 2013.

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/moneybuilder/2011/06/01/pros-and-cons-of-credit-unions-and-there-arent-many-cons/>

"Types of Bank Accounts".

Web. 25 October 2013.

<https://www.wellsfargo.com/financial-education/basic-finance/manage-money/options/bank-account-types/>



Federal Loans: Subsidized and Unsubsidized Options for Undergrad and Grad Students

By Rebekah Livermore

Hello Bruins! As we mentioned in last week's article, before you take out a federal student loan, it is important to know whether or not the loan is subsidized. Your eyes might glaze over while reading some of the official jargon used by lenders, but understanding the difference between these loans is crucial to you as the borrower as it influences the amount you will ultimately end up paying.

How Do I Get a Federal Student Loan?

Federal Loans are offered to qualifying students who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents. To be offered a federal loan, you must **submit the FAFSA** to your school by the priority deadline, usually in early March. The financial aid counselors will review your FAFSA, and determine your level of financial need.

What Is A Subsidized Loan?

Subsidized Loans are loans for students with financial need, which the government will pay interest on while you are still a student. The government also pays interest during a specified grace period after you graduate or drop below half-time status.

Unsubsidized Loans can be offered to any qualifying student, regardless

of financial need. The government does not pay interest on unsubsidized loans, and you start being charged interest while you are still a student. This means that if you don't pay the interest off during your college years, it will be added to the original amount you borrowed, making the total amount you owe higher.

What Kind of Loan Will I Be Offered?

If you're an undergrad, and your school determines you have financial need, you may be offered a Direct **subsidized loan** through the Direct Loan Program. If your school does not determine you have financial need, you can still be offered a Direct loan, but an unsubsidized version. Additionally, if the school determines you have "exceptional financial need," you may be offered a Perkins loan. Perkins Loans are subsidized, and UCLA only offers these to students from low-income families.

When Do I Need To Start Paying Off My Loan(s)?

Both subsidized and unsubsidized loans are in **deferment for undergraduate and graduate students** while you are at least a half-time student, meaning you do not have to make payments during this time. You will still be charged interest during this time if you have an unsubsidized loan. After you stop being a half-time student, most loans have a grace period of several months. After the grace period ends, you have to start making payments. In special cases, your loans can be

deferred again for a specific period of time.

What About Graduate Students?

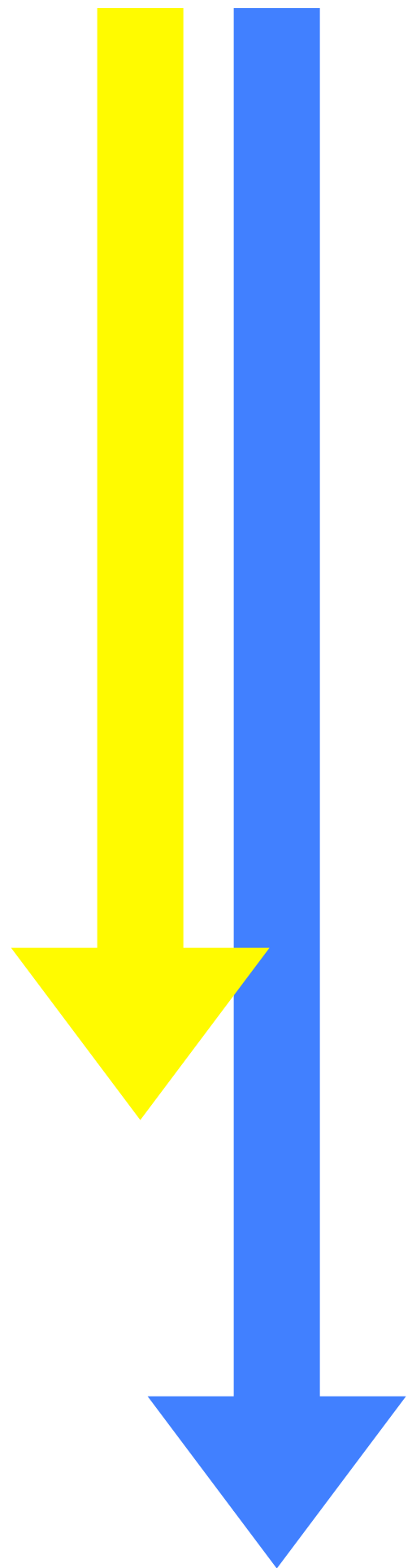
Options for graduate students are limited in terms of qualifying for subsidized student loans. Direct subsidized loans are no longer available for graduate students. Grad students who are deemed to have “exceptional financial need,” may still be offered the subsidized Perkins loan. However, graduate students will generally only be able to receive Direct unsubsidized loans or the unsubsidized Graduate PLUS loan.

Who Can I Contact For More Information?

All UCLA undergraduate and graduate students should contact **Student Loans Services & Collections** to find out about repayment, deferment, and cancellation options at www.loans.ucla.edu.

Are You Considering Graduate or Professional School?

If so, talk with a financial aid counselor (email finaid@saonet.ucla.edu), Graduate Division’s Fellowships and Financial Services (1228 Murphy Hall), and your academic department or school for additional details on loan options.



Private Student Loans: Potential Payoffs and Pitfalls

By Batul Joffrey

After using grants, scholarships, savings, and federal loans, many students have to resort to other means - such as private loans - to fill the gap between billing statements and their wallets. As important as it is to find the means to fund your education, it is equally important to be informed and understand the potential payoffs and pitfalls of such loans.

Potential Payoffs:

1. Availability

Unlike federal student loans that are deadline driven (federal loans are offered through universities once the student submits a FAFSA), private loans can be obtained during any time of the year – whenever the need or emergency arises. One of the biggest benefits of private student loans are that they are not need-based – which means that any borrower who is creditworthy is eligible.

2. Money Limit

Private loans can also be for more money than federal loans. Each private loan usually has a limit on how much you can borrow, but the limit is typically much higher than federal loans.

Pitfalls:

1. Attainability

Eligibility for such loans is based on your credit score. Also, most lenders require you to have a cosigner who will also need a high FICO score.

Thus, you will need one who has both an excellent financial record and is willing to take on the responsibility of the cosigner.

Cosigner Release

In some cases, such as death or permanent disability of the student borrower, the cosigner can be released from the loan, but there are often specific conditions for the releases. Additionally, some loans allow the cosigner to be released after a period of on-time payments, such as 2 or 3 years, even if the student is still alive and well. This is an option to consider and discuss with your cosigner when looking for a private loan.

2. Interest Rates

Interest rates vary depending on each loan, but they are almost always higher than on federal loans. Interest rates can also change over time. For example, they might be lower while you are a student and higher after you graduate. Be sure to read all of the fine print.

3. Repayment Options

As with interest rates, repayment options from private loans vary depending on the loan and lending institution. The repayment options for private loans are usually more rigid than they are for federal loans. Some require you to commit to a repayment program while you are still in school, while others allow a deferred payment plan.

Factors To Consider Before Taking Out A Private Loan:

Have you exhausted all other resources (grants, scholarships, federal loans, work study, jobs)?

What is the interest rate of the loan?
Is the interest rate the same when
you are in school as it is after you
graduate and the loan enters
repayment? Or does the interest rate
increase?

Do you need a cosigner?

What are the cosigner release
options in terms of student death or
permanent disability? What are the
cosigner release options if the
student is well?

Are there additional fees on the loan
besides interest rates?

What are the repayment options
available to you?

When do you have to choose a
repayment option?

Can you change the repayment
option if your financial situation
changes or you enter financial
hardship?

Are you a UCLA student? Do
you have more questions?

Contact Student Loan
Services & Collections at
www.loans.ucla.edu.

For More Information, Please Check
Out:

1. <http://www.finaid.org/loans/privatestudentloans.phtml>

What to Do if You Can't Pay

By Kareem Dakak

Student loans are often the only feasible options for college students who face high tuition and housing costs. Millions of students- 37 million to be exact, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York-take out student loans. Throughout college and after graduating, many borrowers see their economic situations change and are unable to repay their loans. Failure to repay a loan is both stressful in the short-term and potentially damaging to future financial stability.

If you see your ability to repay student loans suddenly reduced, there are a number of options to get through financial hardship. The main focus of exercising options such as deferments or forbearance should be to stay financially stable while getting your feet back on the ground; at no time should failure to repay loans become a normal feature of your financial situation.

Forbearance

If your financial condition is not severe enough to warrant a deferment from the DOE, forbearance is the next option. Similar to deferment, forbearance is well suited for solving temporary problems with repaying student loans. The requirements for obtaining forbearance are broader than those for deferments; a notable example is that students completing a medical or dental internship or residency program are eligible. Monthly payments will be temporarily suspended as they are with

deferments, but interest will continue to accrue on all types of loans.

Deferments

Temporary problems with repaying loans can be abetted by deferments. Deferments are a type of debt resolution that allows the borrower to temporarily stop repaying federal student loans. Direct subsidized loans will not accrue interest during deferments, while PLUS and direct unsubsidized loans will. To obtain a deferment, ensure that you contact your loan servicer. Federal loans are generally lenient with deferments; as long as certain requirements are met (such as enrollment in college or active duty), borrowers should qualify for a deferment.

Unemployment and other verified situations of economic hardship also allow for deferments. Note that requirements for obtaining a deferment on private loans may vary. Despite the possible accrual of interest during deferments, this method of debt resolution is highly favorable in times of financial distress. If your loan servicer is the Department of Education (as is the case with all federal loans), a simple process can be completed to obtain a deferment.

How to defer a federal student loan:

Write a request for deferment to the Department of Education (DOE). Include documentation that demonstrates how you meet at least one of the requirements for deferment qualification. Specify the time that your financial conditions are expected to change (if this is not certain, simply state "indefinite").

Include in your request the statement, "I agree to notify the Department immediately if my status changes. The information I have provided is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge."

Seeking a deferment is thus a relatively straightforward process. A very crucial aspect of receiving deferments is communication; ensure that you and your loan servicer are always on the same page so that deadlines are not missed. Miscommunication can cause costly errors that worsen already delicate financial situations.

Repayment Options

Loan servicers often offer a wide variety of options for repayment of debt. These include:

Standard Repayment: Loans will be paid back a fixed amount each month, in at least \$50 increments and with a time limit of ten years. This option is typically best suited to those who can afford to pay more each month, and its fast repayment ensures that interest accrual is kept to a minimum.

Extended Repayment: An eligibility requirement of at least \$30,000 in debt must be met, and you will have a maximum of 25 years to repay. There is a fixed option, which entails consistent monthly payments throughout the repayment period. Additionally, a graduated option allows you to pay small amounts that gradually increase over the years. Note that despite the convenience of extended repayment, interest will continue to accrue throughout the repayment period.

Graduated Repayment: Similar to the graduated option for extended

repayment, but must be paid in ten rather than 25 years.

Income Contingent Repayment: Monthly payments will be calculated as a percentage of gross income, family size, and the size of the loan. Payment will not exceed 20% of your monthly income. The maximum repayment time for this option is 25 years, and note that it does not apply to PLUS loans.

Income-based Repayment: Monthly payments will be based on income, repayment can exceed ten years, and monthly payments can be adjusted annually.

Pay as you Earn Repayment: Usually the lowest monthly payments are entailed by this plan; amounts are based on income and family size. Requirements for demonstrating partial financial hardship must be met. Meeting the requirements once allow you to continue on the repayment plan even after emerging from hardship.

Credit Cards

Debt from loans is not the only type of debt students typically have; credit card debt of students averages about \$3,000 by the time of graduation and can also have harmful financial consequences for the future. There are a variety of ways to avoid credit card debt.

Ensure that your income (if you have one) can cover your spending, and look into secured cards. Secured cards function similarly to debit cards, preventing debt. Credit cards should only be used if there is an income to support them, as your credit score will follow you throughout life and could potentially be weak before you even graduate.

Consequences of Failure to Pay

Defaulting on a student loan can severely damage financial situations. Credit scores are slashed in the case of defaults, harming the ability to borrow in the future for car, home, and other large purchases. Complete cancellation of loans is rare and only granted under severe conditions. One of these is death, and another is full disability. In order to have a loan cancelled due to bankruptcy, it must be proven in bankruptcy court that paying the loan would cause an undue burden. Other rare cases in which loans would be cancelled include closure of the institution that a student is attending.

For more information:

DOE loan website:

<http://www.direct.ed.gov/postpone.html>

Federal student debt information:

https://www.myeddebt.com/borrower/myoptions_deferments.action

Statistics on student debt (NY

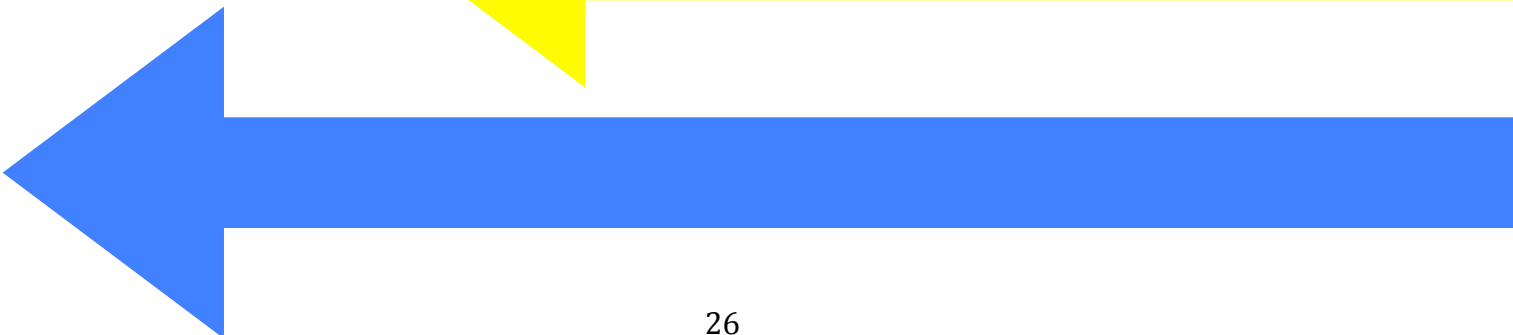
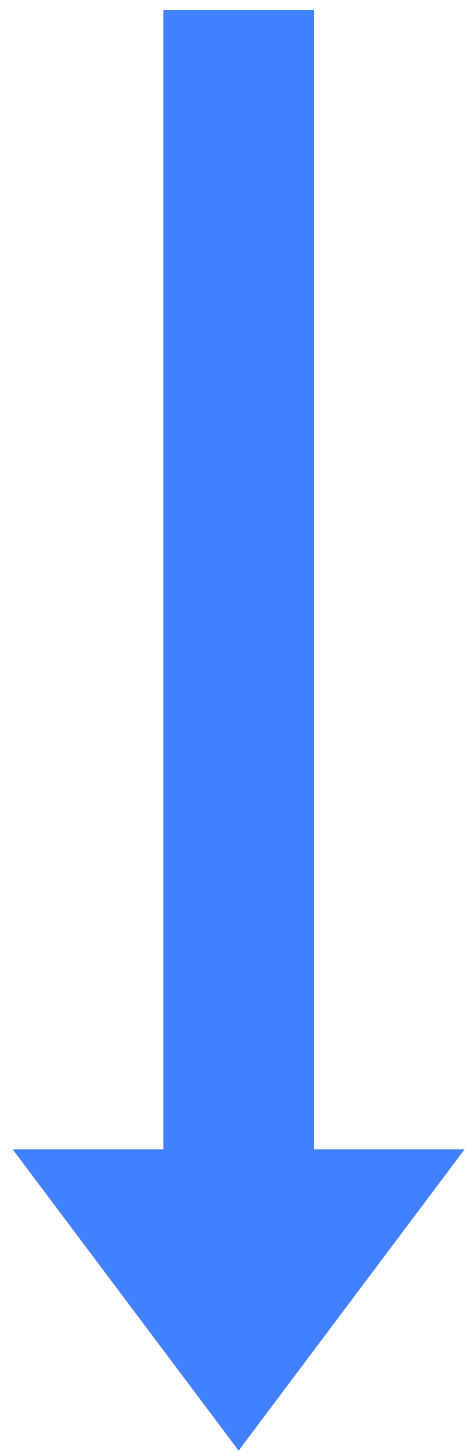
Federal Reserve):

<http://libertystreeteconomics.newyorkfed.org/2012/03/grading-student-loans.html>

Private loan deferment information:

https://www.studentloan.com/pay_your_loans/defermentforbearance.htm

<https://www.discover.com/student-loans/repayment/deferment.html>



Getting Out of Debt 101

By Valentia Angelin

Many of us might not be thinking about how to get out of student debts while we are still in college. The mere thought of paying thousands of dollars can be daunting and frightening. However, it is best to come to terms with our student debts to make sure that we are taking the necessary steps to repay them in the future. Here are some useful tips you can consider to make your debt payments less painful and more doable.

Actively Manage Your Debts

It is easy to avoid thinking about your student debts until it's finally time to repay them, but it is in your best interests to be actively involved in managing your debts and tracking them down. You might have your own ways of managing your debts - be it your parents, a Google Doc, or maybe an iPhone app. Regardless of what you are using right now, it would be a good idea to have the data and information handy with you at all times.

A good way to make sure you are on top of your debts is by logging into <http://www.nslds.ed.gov>. The website helps you keep track of your guaranteed loans. If you have other types of loans, such as direct and private loans, gather your debts by obtaining a credit report. After collecting all the crucial information, make a spreadsheet detailing each debt that you have, including the interest rates of each loan. Different loans have different rates and you

can choose to pay your debts based on these rates. Consolidating your debts will help you plan your finances and figure out which ones to pay first or later.

Avoid Registering for Extended Repayment Programs

While it seems tempting to extend your repayment window by a few additional months or even years, you should avoid doing it as much as possible. The reason is simple - the longer you are holding out your student loans, the later you can start saving for retirement. The basis of savings and investing is compound interest rates, and with fewer years in your pocket for retirement planning, the tougher your older years might be. While it might be difficult to meet these payments, try your best to keep within the repayment period, because you will be thankful that you started saving earlier when you finally retire.

Opt For Bi-Weekly Payment Schemes

What? Paying more often than you already are? It might seem like a less conventional idea, but paying your student loans on a bi-weekly basis might save you more money. A bi-weekly payment system would enable you to save on interest because it would not accumulate over a long period, as opposed to a regular monthly payment system. Since interest rates are the main driver of student loans, any strategy that would help reduce those interests might come in handy eventually. This strategy has been

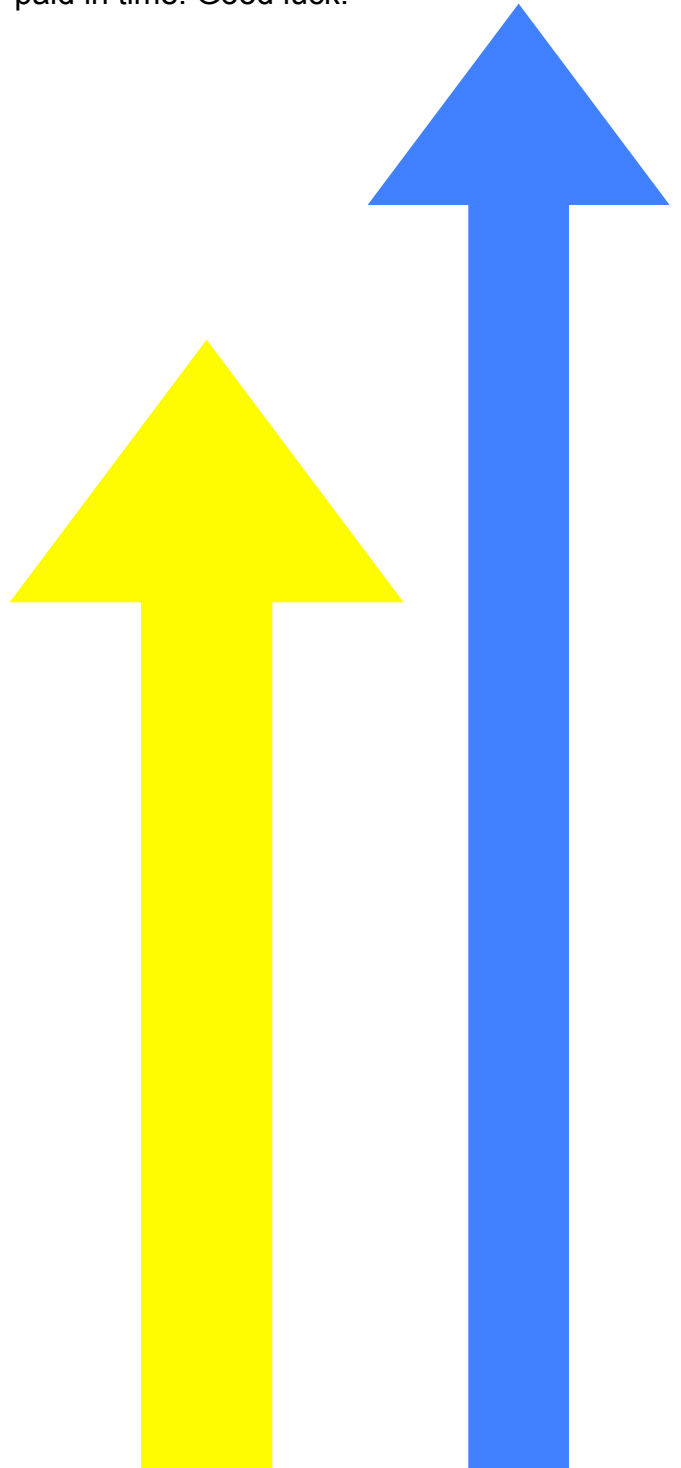
shown to be effective in helping you reduce your loans faster. However, it is important to note that this might not work if you are already subscribed to automatic payments from your bank account, which already reduces your interest rates.

Make Necessary Lifestyle Adjustments

Many people may not be too excited about this particular advice. However, when you are bogged down by debts that might be twice as much as your current income, it might be a good idea to start changing your lifestyle habits here and there to allow you to meet your payments. This does not mean that you have to significantly reduce your standard of living; it simply means being a more responsible adult by cutting down on unnecessary spending or taking up additional jobs that might help you pay your debts.

This can be done in many creative ways. Some of the obvious ones include opting for a cheaper apartment, reducing happy hours and finding travel deals. However, there are plenty of opportunities for you to make some extra cash on top of your regular income these days. Car-sharing services like Lyft and Uber allow you to be a driver and you can make as much as \$500 (or even more) per month. You can even consider part-time or one-off jobs like being a mystery shopper, a baby sitter or a temporary bartender. There are various ways to help you pay off your student debts if you look hard enough!

In conclusion, the best way to pay your student debts is by coming to terms with it and actively taking steps to pay them within the 10-year period. The road ahead is daunting and might not be an easy one for some of us, but as long as we keep an open and positive approach to it, student loans can be tackled and paid in time. Good luck!



Now and Forever: Your Relationship with Your Credit Score

By Rebekah Livermore

As students, many of us focus on our immediate financial lives. Paying our rent and tuition, buying food, and the costs of going out with friends seem to be our most pressing financial concerns. However, focusing on building and protecting your credit score now is extremely important for your financial life.

Important Facts about Credit Scores

1. **For most loans, you will need a good credit score.** This can include anything from a new credit card, to a car loan, or a mortgage someday. Many apartments or other rental properties require a credit check as well.
2. **Great credit is not built quickly.** To build a great credit score, it takes significant time and diligence in managing your finances.
3. **Credit Scores reflect more than just your credit card history.** In addition to credit cards - both ones from credit card companies and retail stores – payments on your student loans, car loans, medical bills, and mortgages are all factors that comprise your credit score.
4. **It matters how often your credit is checked.** If your credit is checked too often, this can lower your credit score. Why? Because this

means you are often applying for some kind of loan or credit card. This damages your credit.

5. **It matters how many accounts you have.** If you only have a couple accounts and you pay them responsibly, your credit score will be lower than someone who has several accounts over a long period of time and pays them responsibly. **However, do not open several accounts in a short period of time, and never open more accounts than you can responsibly pay.** It is obviously not to your advantage if you have several accounts but do not pay them responsibly.
6. **It matters how long you have had your accounts.** Paying a credit card or a loan responsibly for a short period of time is good, but for this to have a significant impact on your credit score, you need to **show a long-term trend** of being responsible with your payments.

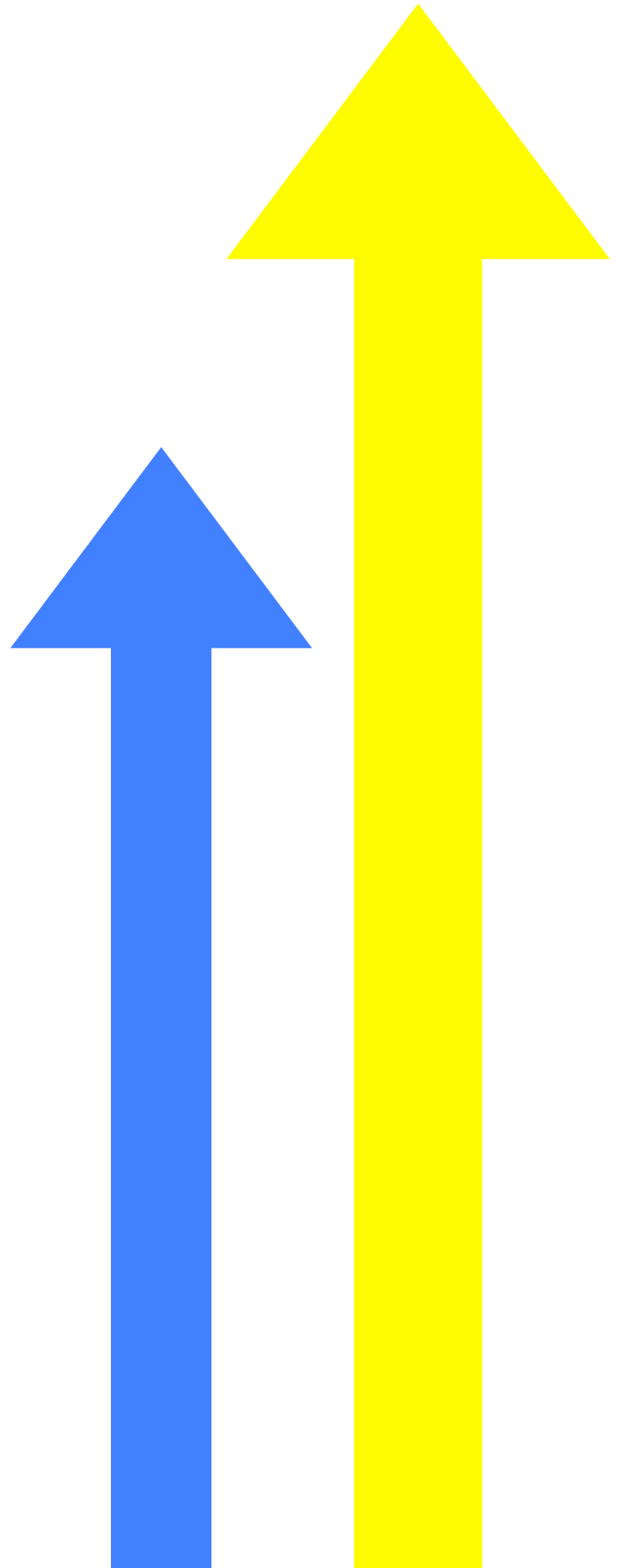
How Can You Start Building Your Credit Today?

1. **Consider opening a credit card.** If you are able to responsibly manage a credit card, it is to your benefit to open one now rather than several years later. Consider opening a **secured credit card** if you are able to get one.
2. **Be careful with your student loans.** If you have student

loans, defaulting on payments can severely harm your credit. Your loan might be deferred while you are in school, or you might have to make payments on it now (such as if you have a private loan). In either situation, it is important to manage your finances to be sure you have the funds to make the appropriate payments whether they are due now or later.

3. **Make more than the minimum payment on your accounts.** This is an often-heard tip, but paying more than you have to on your card builds your credit score and reduces the amount of interest you end up paying on your bill.
4. **Eventually increase your credit limit.** Your first credit card will likely not have a high credit limit. This can prevent you from overspending, but part of your credit score is based on what your credit limit is. After carefully managing your accounts for a significant period of time, applying to increase your credit limit on the cards you have can raise your credit score.
5. **Remember: your credit score is here for the long haul.** If you are not careful and your credit score is lowered, it will take a long time to build it up again. **Always** be responsible with your accounts, **never** get in over your head, and remember that **great credit**

will serve you well and bad credit will dampen many of your future options.



Your First Credit Card

By Kareem Dakak

Tuition and housing are not the only costs in college; students can quickly spend large sums of money on food, books, and other miscellaneous costs. If summer jobs fail to materialize, credit cards are often an attractive option for getting through the various expenses of student life. Although convenient, credit cards can impact future financial situations and must be taken seriously.

How to Open a Card

To open a card without a co-signer, you must be at least 18 and meet the following requirements:

1. Get Employed

Federal law requires credit card users under 18 to have verifiable, residual income if they open a card without a co-signer. If you are not employed, have a parent co-sign. If you do have a job, make sure that your spending does not outpace income. Keeping balances under control and paid on time ensures that your future credit score will not be off to a bad start.

2. Have a Good Credit History and Little Debt

This does not apply if it is your first credit card, but know that

future issuances of cards will rely on your credit score and debt. Make sure that you do not have overdrafts, and that you continue to make healthy deposits into your account. If your job ever becomes an uncertainty, abstain from using the card until the situation improves.

3. Run a Tight Ship

Keep your credit card balance low relative to your limits; if you prove that you can stay well below your limits, creditors will notice and your credit score will help rather than hurt you.

Co-signer Requirements

Because you will not have a significant credit history when signing up for your first credit card, you will most likely need a co-signer unless you are employed. The co-signer, most likely a parent, will have to apply for the credit card as well. The co-signer will have to pass a credit check in order to assume the responsibilities associated with the card issuance. This debt will be factored into all future loans, so a disastrous overdraft could have major long-term implications.

What Card to Get

The choice of a first credit card is often done with little thought; banks flood campus with stands that give away freebies,

and students require little more encouragement. However, the choice of your first credit card is a very important one. Consider the following when signing up to ensure the best credit card experience for the present and future:

1. Think About a Secured Credit Card

Secured credit cards are set up with a security deposit that serves as insurance in the case of overdraft. Initial deposits typically hover around \$500 for students, and banks will sometimes add to the credit line to reward good repayment behavior. Secured credit cards may seem slightly limiting, but they are good options for starting credit history on a safe note.

2. Research

At UCLA, you have access to the Internet as well as thousands of students with credit cards. Research credit card statistics and reviews online, and then ask fellow students about their experiences with certain banks. Pay attention to the average ages and incomes associated with different credit cards to get an idea of which ones are preferred by students. Credit cards can be convenient aids to student life, covering late-night food cravings or

surprise fees. They can also start credit history with massive debt and overdrafts. Follow good techniques and be responsible so that your first credit card does not become a regret. Here is a basic list of steps you should complete when getting a credit card:

- “ Get a job so you will not need a co-signer
- “ Stay well under spending limits to build a good credit score
- “ Look up credit card companies online and read reviews
- “ Ask fellow students about their experiences with credit cards
- “ Look into secured credit cards
- “ Do not base decisions off freebies given on Bruin Walk

For more, consult the following:

<https://www.creditkarma.com/article/getting-a-new-credit-card>

<http://www.bankrate.com/finance/credit-cards/10-questions-before-getting-a-secured-credit-card-1.aspx>

<http://www.bankrate.com/finance/credit-cards/5-warnings-credit-card-co-signer-3.aspx>

<https://creditcards.chase.com/>

Good Credit Card Habits for the College Student: Your Guide to Swiping Responsibly

By Amy Heng

Have you ever noticed how easy it is to spend money nowadays? Even when we don't leave the comforts of our beds on Saturdays or Sundays, we can easily place an order on Amazon or some other site and *poof* goes our money. So many of us don't have to open our wallets, let alone carry cash in them. However because we don't *physically* feel like our money is going away when we swipe a credit or debit card, we tend to spend more and more than we should.

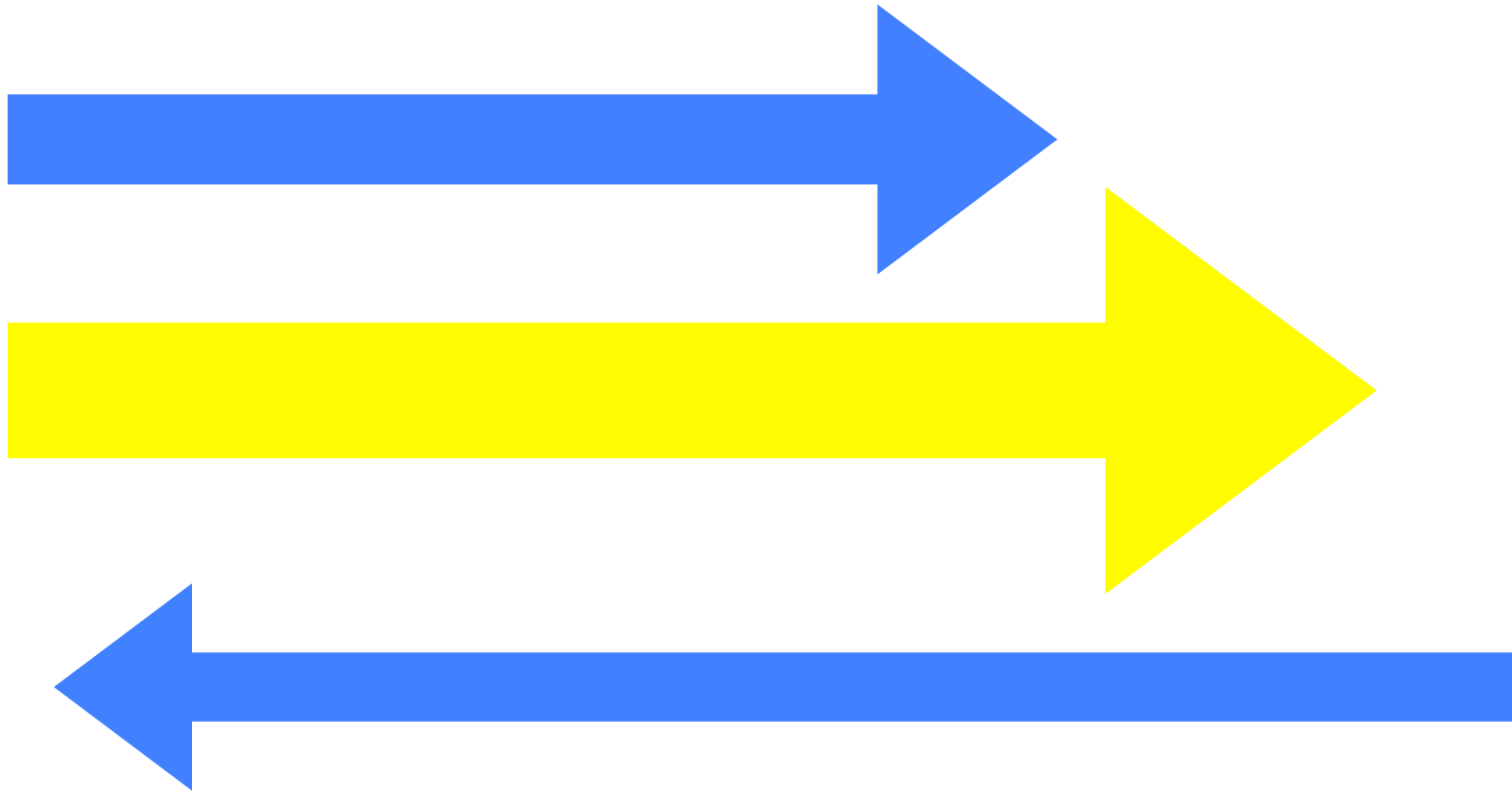
How, then, can you swipe responsibly? It's easy! Learn good spending habits now because they will save you from a lifetime of grief later. Don't worry though; most of these habits are actually really easy to follow!

1. **Do your research and sign up a credit card with the best (i.e., low) interest rate.** Don't be fooled by flashy advertisements! Instead, read your disclosure statements and fine print to understand fees that come with credit cards and avoid the hidden and unnecessary fees.
2. **Register for an online account with the credit card.** If the credit card company charges you to use an online account, go with a different company. By registering you can always check your balance, access customer service, and check reward programs anywhere and anytime if you have a smartphone or access to a computer.
3. **Check your balance at least once a week and keep track of your expenses.** Many college students do *not* have a regular flow of income and we definitely don't spend regularly either. By checking your accounts often and knowing what you spent, you can avoid fraud and overspending. If you use both cash and credit cards, download any of the free expense manager applications in the App Store or Play Store to your phones right now! If you're like most college students, your phone is with you 24/7 and you'll always have the most up-to-date info on your money.
4. **Sign up for Text or Email notifications.** Through your online account with your credit card company, you can set up notifications that can tell you when you're reaching your spending limits, upcoming due dates for bills, irregular purchases, and so much more.
5. Even if your credit limit is high, **don't buy more than you can afford to pay back at the end of the month.** Many students have the mentality of "buy now, pay later" but that's the worst thing

you can do for yourself right now. You'll start paying only the minimum causing your debt to increase; eventually you'll know the nasty taste of stress of money that will last you for years.

6. **Pay your full balance and on time.** Did you know that only paying the minimum would cause you to pay more for what you bought due to interest than had you paid in full? Simply pay the balance as soon as you get the bill.

7. **Take advantage of your rewards program and benefits,** if your credit card company offers them. Keep track of dates for deals that you are entitled to as a cardholder and take advantage of them. Many credit card companies will often offer travel benefits like roadside assistance and purchase protection like extended warranty.



Protect Yourself From Identity Theft

By Valentia Angelin

What Do You Know about Identity Protection?

With the widespread use of Facebook, Twitter, and other popular websites, along with an increase in fraudulent e-mails and text messages, many people are subconsciously sharing their private information. You might even share sensitive information such as

your social security number, debit card numbers, or even your Bruincard ID number with friends or unauthorized websites. These actions can all lead to identity theft.

What Happens If Someone Steals Your Information?

People can use your identity to file fake applications for loans and credit cards, make unauthorized bank withdrawals, and more. Even a stolen Bruincard can deplete your meal swipes, EasyPay balance, or access your personal information stored in the campus database.

How to Prevent Identity Theft

1. Do not share your personal information with entities you are unfamiliar with or

those you do not solicit business with. For instance, a credit union where you have an account with would not contact you by e-mail asking you to verify your social security number.

Personal information includes, but is not limited to, your social security number, credit and debit card numbers and pins, Internet banking ID and any passwords associated with your accounts.

2. Be extra alert when you are doing transactions at public places. A good practice is covering the pin pad when you are using your debit card or credit card at ATMs, grocery stores or any other public places. Identity thieves tend to shoulder surf for PINs at public places.

3. Be wary of giving your financial and personal information to someone you are unfamiliar with. If you are unsure of their credibility, make sure that you check with the associated companies before completing the transaction.

4. Make sure you go through your financial statements regularly. Take note of any suspicious or unusual financial activity and make sure you keep receipts to

- confirm past transactions.
5. Shred all financial documents after you have finished looking through them. These documents hold pertinent information about you that might be misused by others.
6. Make sure you keep your ID and password for Internet sites secure. Use a strong password, avoiding predictable passwords such as your name, birthday, "password123" and the like. The more unpredictable your password is, the lower the probability of someone hacking into your account and making fraudulent transactions. It is also a good practice to change your password regularly to better protect your accounts.
7. Avoid sharing personal information such as phone numbers and addresses on social media websites. You can still be reached on these platforms without providing such sensitive information.
8. Control your privacy settings online to make sure that your social media content is only seen by a pre-approved group of people.
8. Get a free copy of your credit report. Go to AnnualCreditReport.com

for a free copy of your credit report. Check it annually to verify accuracy of your report.

Handling an Identity Theft

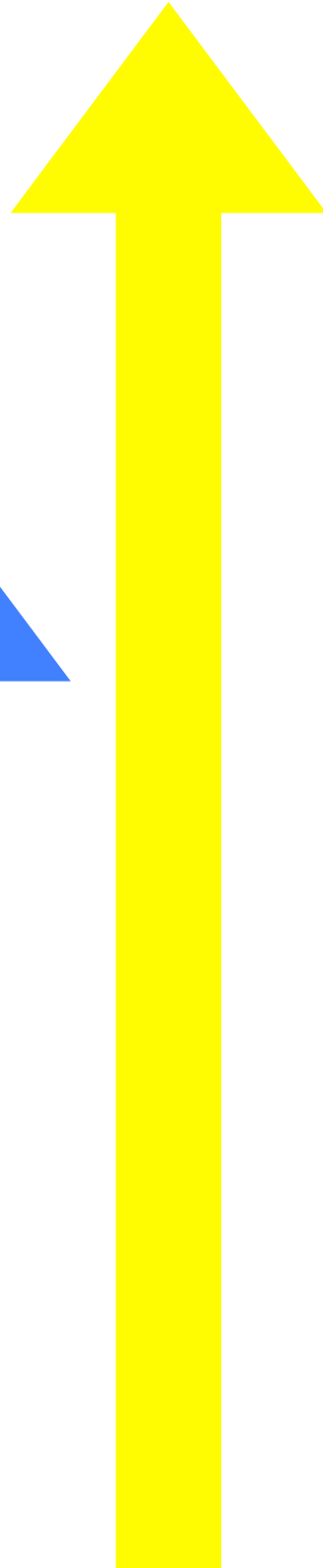
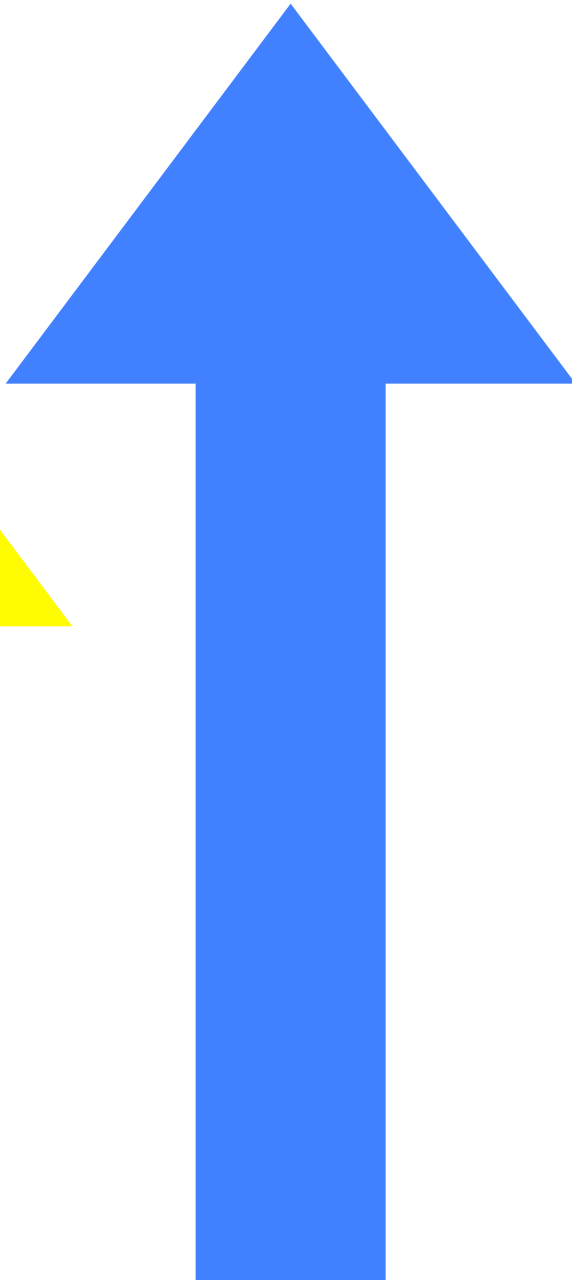
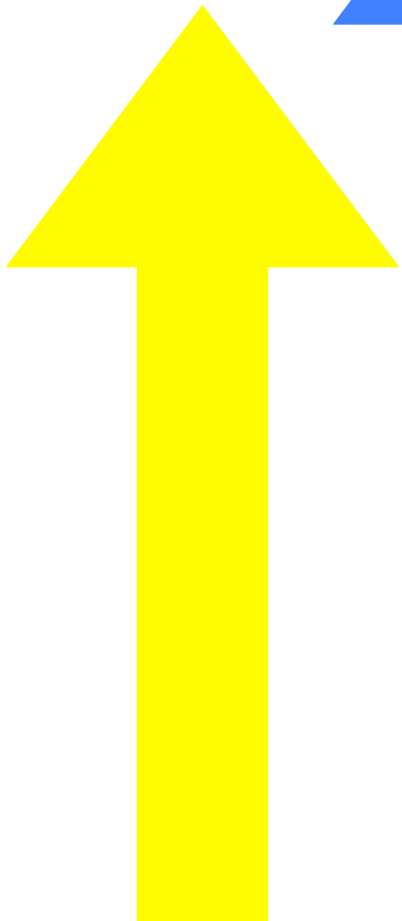
In the event any form of your identification has been stolen, here are the steps you should take immediately after the event has occurred:

1. Report the incident to your financial institution. Store the financial institution's number in your mobile device or have it handy all the time to facilitate faster reporting. You can omit this step if the item stolen is your identification card, such as your driver's license or state IDs.
2. Report the incident to UCPD. Keep a copy of the police report in order to facilitate subsequent investigations and claims to creditors and retailers.
3. Report the case to credit-reporting bureaus and request for them to flag your account with a fraud alert. This prevents identity thieves from requesting new credits without your approval.
4. Continue to monitor your account activities and keep track of any fraudulent or unusual activities.

For More Information, Please Visit:

<http://www.usa.gov/topics/money/identity-theft/prevention.shtml>

http://www.ucu.org/protecting_identity_info.htm



Life Beyond “The Hill:” A Quick Guide to Off-Campus Housing for UCLA Students

By: Emma Persson

Navigating the details of off-campus housing can be both exciting and complicated. From classic apartments, to non-traditional options such as the co-op, and even sorority and fraternity housing, off-campus housing provides students with additional living options. This newfound independence comes with more financial responsibility, and requires careful planning to stay on track.

Apartment Life:

Living in an apartment offers more privacy, independence, and space. However, this comes with increased financial responsibility. Some commonly asked questions about off-campus living options are:

- *Where do I find the right apartment? What are the popular areas to live in?*

Many students choose to live walking distance from UCLA, on streets such as Strathmore, Landfair, Roebling, Kelton, or Hilgard. If you are willing to travel further, there are apartments relatively close to

UCLA that are often cheaper than Westwood apartments, such as in Koreatown, Palms, and Culver City. Check out apartments served by the Big Blue Bus, Culver City, and Metro lines if you need public transportation. In order to find the right place, ask other students, refer to Bruinwalk reviews

(<http://www.bruinwalk.com/apartments/>), or take advantage of the UCLA Community Housing Office resources (see below).

- *So I have found a place I'm interested in, how do I go about signing a lease?*

Once you think you've found a place, contact the landlord for more information. Early spring quarter is a good time to start looking at apartments for the fall, as attractive housing options fill up very quickly.

Make sure you understand all the details of your **lease** before signing, as these are binding. Also, keep in mind that you will have to pay a **deposit**. Deposit amounts vary widely, and can be from around \$500-\$1500 or more. You might get some of this back, depending on the condition of your apartment once you move out. If at all possible, talk to previous tenants who have experience with the landlord, as some landlords are stricter on how

much of the deposit will be returned.

- *How much are off-campus apartments?*

Monthly rent varies according to which apartment or complex one chooses to live in and how many roommates you have. Apartments in Westwood can be pricey, but can be more affordable if you choose to live with 3 or 4 other roommates. One can expect to pay from \$550/month up to about \$1,000/month for rent.

- *How much are utilities typically?*

Utility costs depend on where you live and the amount used. Find out if any utilities are covered or if you will be responsible for all of them. On average, an individual can expect to pay a range from \$30-\$70 a month for utility costs on top of monthly rent.

- *What about food costs?*

If you live in an apartment, you will be responsible for your meals and all associated costs. It is important to have and stick to a budget, so you do not spend more than you can afford to on food.

- *What does it mean to sublet my apartment, or to be a subletter?*

Subletting your apartment means that you are finding someone as your replacement to live in your apartment for a given amount of time, covering rent and utility costs. People tend to sublet when they are away over the summer or abroad for a quarter.

Sororities and Fraternities

UCLA's Greek community also offers off-campus housing for undergraduate sorority and fraternity members. Students undergo recruitment in order to pledge a chapter and become initiated into the organization. Typically, the average sorority house capacity is 50, while fraternities often house 40 members. Living in Greek housing includes weekday meals and utilities, but membership dues are required. For specific information about Greek life housing and membership fees, visit <http://www.greeklife.ucla.edu/housing.html>.

For More Information:
UCLA Housing Services: www.housing.ucla.edu.
UCLA Community Housing Office: www.cho.ucla.edu

Taxes: The Quick Guide for Students

By Amy Heng

We've all heard our parents complain about taxes, but what many of us don't know is that there are many different types of taxes for different aspects of our lives. Great men like Benjamin Franklin argued that nothing in life is as certain as death and taxes; unfortunately he's kind of right.

Everyday taxes. The taxes we are most familiar with are sales tax. It is a set percentage that can differ depending on where you made a purchase. When we pay these taxes, a portion of it goes to the state, county, and city that the good was purchased from. These taxes often help fund local services such as transportation and park services.

There are also many hidden taxes that are written into our everyday purchases. When you buy gasoline, the tax is included in the price. When you pay your cell phone bill, it includes a federal and state tax included in the price. But these taxes pay for many of the hidden services we may not see everyday.

Filing taxes. Early each new year, you will hear many working adults in your life complain about filing taxes. But what does that mean exactly? Filing taxes means you declare your income for that year as well as any deductions and exemptions that may lower your tax bill, so long as it in accordance to the laws presented in federal and state legislatures. If

you've paid taxes, or money that the government has withheld, in your income statements and you subtract that number with any deductions and exemptions you are allowed and receive a negative number, meaning you've paid more taxes than your tax bill states you should pay, you will receive a tax refund.

Work taxes. When you get hired for a new job, you are buried in paperwork, one of which will be a W-4 tax form. It is used to determine the correct amount of taxes you as an employee should withhold from your government through your paycheck. A paycheck denotes government services in percentages that are taken from your net pay, or total pay before taxes. Social security and Medicare are examples of the government services that are supported through your paycheck taxes.

A W-4 form helps you calculate how many exemptions you can claim by telling the government who you are as a person. You can receive some exemptions for being a homeowner, being married, or having children. The more exemptions you claim, the more deductions you can claim because you pay less in taxes.

Know your withholdings. If you make under \$5950 a year, you will receive a standard deduction, or withhold your taxes from the government. This means you should not be taxed for the first \$5950 you make, but you will once you make more than that amount.

If you did not file your W-4 with an 'exempt' in the boxes, the government will deduct certain percentages, which depends on the city, county, and state you work in, each time from your paychecks to pay. However, after the federal fiscal year, you will receive the money the government took from you in the form of a tax return.

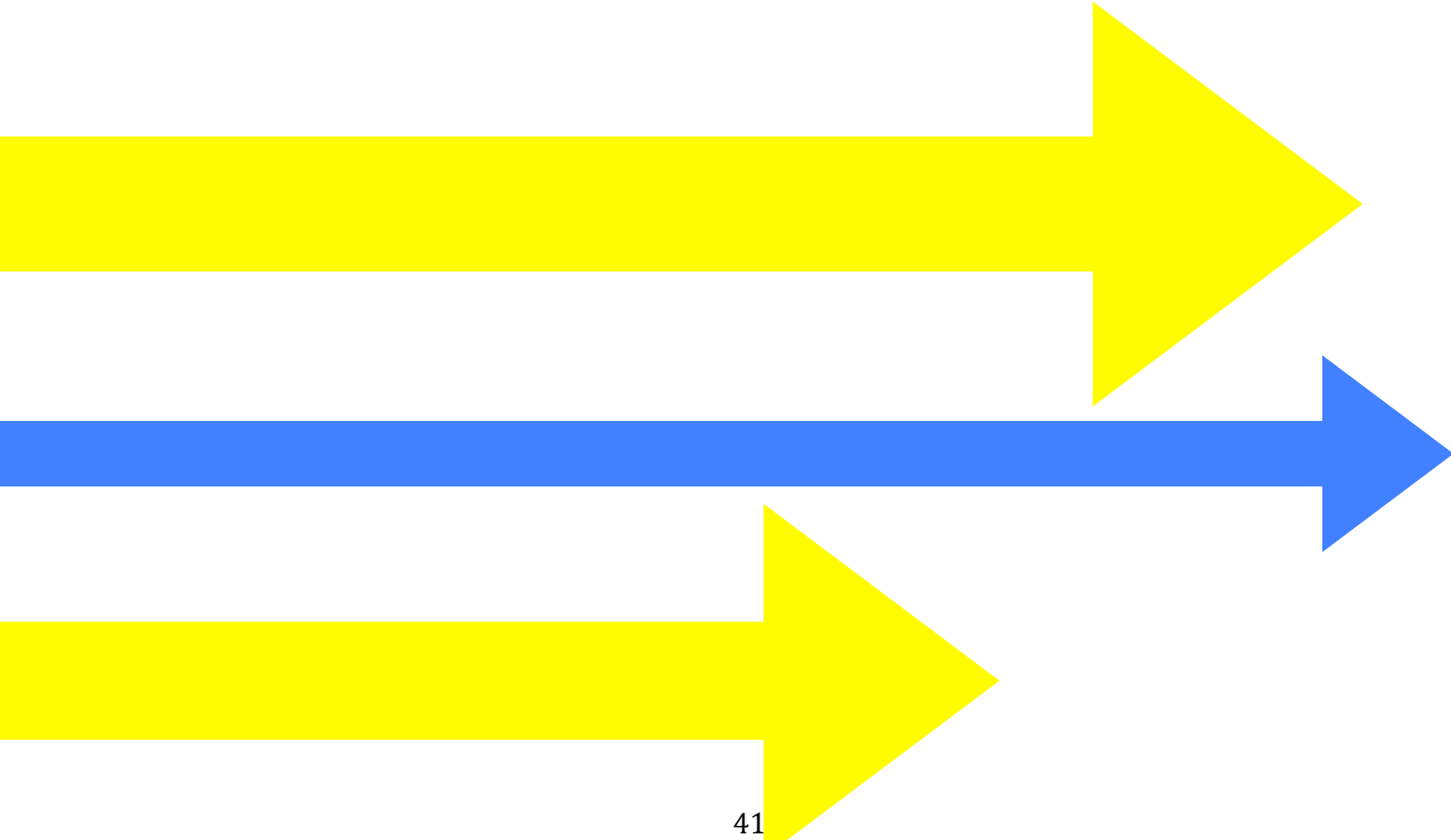
Know your available exemptions.

When you file as an independent, the government is able to take more from your income. This means you have fewer deductions because you are not responsible for another person, or a dependent. Filing as a married person or head of house will give you a larger standard deduction. Having children or dependents gives you additional exemptions of \$3900 each, meaning you will not be taxed for an additional \$3900 of your income. Ask your hiring manager for

detailed specifics when filing your W-4 to maximize your options.

Other tax forms. You may have heard of W-2's, maybe you even mistook them for the W-4's but they are slightly different. A W-2 is a statement of your yearly earnings; it details the portion of your income that the government withheld from you due to taxes you had to pay.

The main form that most of us will use to file taxes is called 1040EZ. This is the shortest and easiest federal tax form. You will usually file a 1040EZ when you make less than \$100,000 a year, you and your spouse are under 65 years old, and/or your filing status is single or married and filing jointly.



Transportation Alternatives: No Car? No Problem.

By Kareem Dakak

Having a car at UCLA can be expensive, but may not be necessary for most students. There are numerous ways to get around Los Angeles, including public and private options. Buses run from UCLA to Culver City and Santa Monica, often costing only 50 cents each way. Additionally, the Amtrak and Metrolink train services run throughout California. UCLA also offers multiple transportation options that are often cheaper than private alternatives.

UCLA-Subsidized Transportation:

1. BruinGo! is a program that allows both commuters and on-campus residents to travel at subsidized rates on the Santa Monica Blue Bus and Culver City Bus. Rates are \$33 a quarter with a Flash Pass, or 50 cents a ride.
2. Go Metro is another transit solution, with UCLA students eligible for a 50% discount on unlimited quarterly passes. These passes work on any Metro Bus and Rail line, which are extensive throughout Los Angeles.
3. Location-Specific bus transportation is also offered.

Examples include the LADOT (San Fernando and Encino), City of San Clarita Transit, and the Antelope Valley Trust Authority (Lancaster and Palmdale).

4. The Bruin Commuter Club encompasses a variety of transit options aimed at assisting UCLA commuters. This includes the UCLA Vanpool, which allows students to travel in a van to and from campus with several destinations in Los Angeles, Orange County, and other areas. The club also sponsors 3-person carpools and gives benefits to those who use any UCLA-sponsored transportation.

Private Transportation:

1. Zipcar is a popular service, offering flexibility with its different plans. Users can rent a car for as little as an hour or by the day. The 'occasional driving' plan, for example, offers infrequent drivers a pay-as-you-go basis for using Zipcar. Note that there is additionally a \$25 application fee for all Zipcar plans, as well as a \$60/year annual fee for the occasional driving plan. Zipcar is often convenient for students because it includes gas, insurance, and free mileage up to 180 miles. Stations are located

throughout LA and near UCLA.

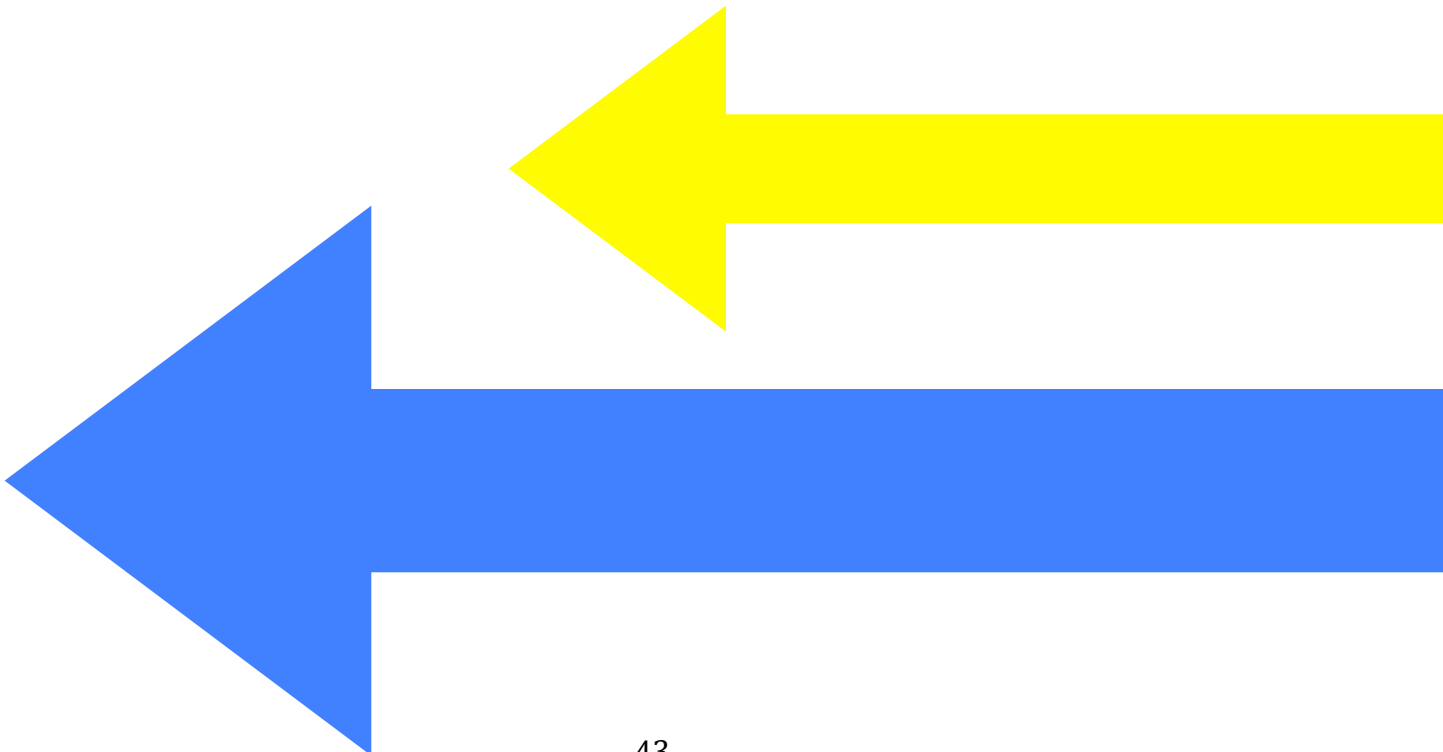
2. Uber is a relatively new service that allows convenient ride sharing, done through a mobile app and paid for with a pre-loaded credit card. This service utilizes private-citizen drivers that are looking for 'fares' and can pick you up at your location. The locations of drivers are displayed on the app, and payments require no cash. However, the service is known to be expensive. This service can be beneficial for quick, shorter-distance rides.

Los Angeles is notorious for its heavy reliance on personal vehicles, due to its lack of massive subway

networks found in other large cities. However, UCLA students have access to an extensive suite of transportation options, tailored for both commuters and on-campus residents. Be aware of the subsidies offered through UCLA Transportation, and consider private alternatives such as Uber for unique situations.

If you would like to discuss transportation options at UCLA, visit the transportation office on the first floor of the Strathmore building, or go online and visit transportation.ucla.edu.

Additionally, check out: <https://www.admissions.ucla.edu/NewBruins/Commute.htm>



Never Too Early: Planning For Your Retirement Even As a Student

By Valentia Angelin

As college students, planning retirement might seem like an odd thing to do. Retirement seems like a distant concept that might not necessarily apply to us right now. In reality, many financial and wealth advisers believe that one key aspect to a happy and successful retirement lies in early planning. Here is why you should start thinking about saving that nest egg for yourself in the future.

Why plan now?

In college, you start learning to manage your own finances. Chances are, your current spending and saving habits would carry on in the future. By planning your retirement right now, you can have an advantage of knowing how much you would need by the time you retire. It will also make you think twice before you spend on something.

Starting retirement plans early will also give you a significant financial advantage.

Calculations have proven that you can end up with significantly more money in your retirement account if you start early. Why is this so? This is because a few years of savings can make a difference in the long run. Once you start contributing to your retirement account, that money does not remain stagnant, it grows at different growth rates, depending on a variety of reasons. The earlier you start, the more years' worth of interest rates you can enjoy in the future. Further, interest rates are applied to prior year's account balance, which would mean greater gains for you in the future.

What can I do to start?

1. Explore different options for retirement plans.

There are different retirement plans out there. Even though you might not be working now, it might be a good idea to explore the different options that you can exercise once you enter the workforce. The 401(k) and IRA retirement plans are two of the most common ones around. Both give you some form of tax advantages in a way

or another. Here are some descriptions about the different plans, even though this is just an overview and you should do your own research before deciding on a plan.

The 401(k)

This plan allows you to contribute up to \$17,500 a year into your account. One unique thing about this plan is your contribution comes before your taxable income, which effectively reduces the amount of income taxes attributed to you. Also, there is always an opportunity of a matching contribution from your employer, up to 50% of your own contribution. This means if you contribute \$1,000 to your account, your employer might contribute up to \$500 to your account, increasing the amount of money that will get compounded by the interest rates. Also, your earnings from the 401(k) would not be subjected to income taxes. Despite its benefits, there are some downsides to it as well, so make sure you read the fine prints before deciding on the 401(k) as no plan is perfect

The IRA

There are two types of IRA accounts: traditional IRA and Roth IRA. Both offer different kinds of tax advantages. They work similarly with the 401(k), where you can contribute a portion of your earnings each year to the accounts. With prudent investment, your money will grow according to the interest rate. The main difference between traditional and Roth IRAs lies in when taxes are deducted from your account. Traditional IRA allows for tax-free growth, but the gains you made from investing in the account will be taxable upon withdrawal. Roth IRA on the other hand, requires your income to be taxed but this means that you owe zero taxes upon withdrawal in the future. Do consider your own needs before deciding on which account to open.

2. Save, save and save.

Savings is key when it comes to retirement. Without savings, you are most likely unable to contribute to these retirement accounts. Make sure to make wise decisions when it comes to spending and save whenever you can to ensure a more comfortable retirement in the future.

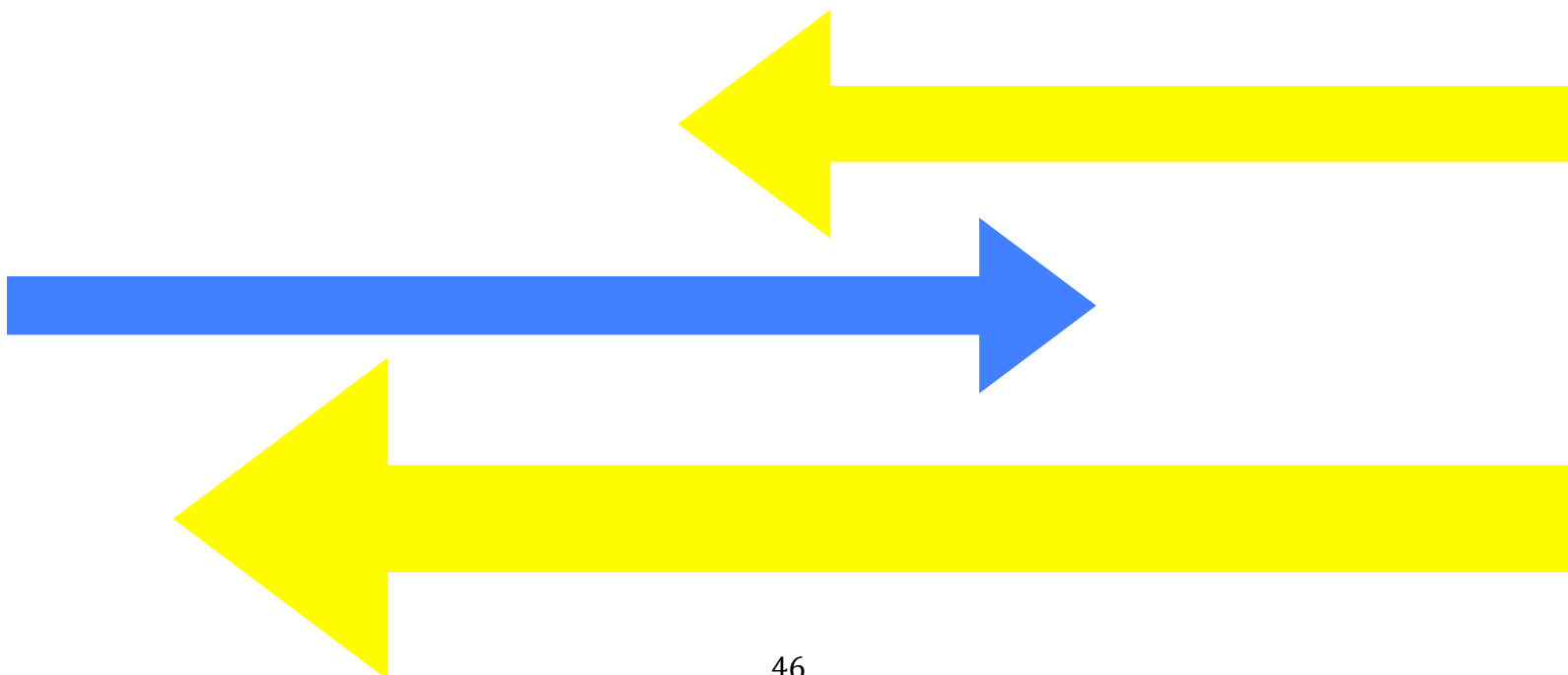
3. Explore different investment options.

Now that you have the money and retirement account, the next step would be exploring different investment options to allow your money to grow in their respective accounts. There are two main ways to invest your money: stocks and bonds. This whole part merits a whole new discussion, but in general, stocks are used towards long-term growth whereas bonds give you gains in terms of interest payments. Start educating yourself on the different investment choices to allow your savings to grow.

4. Maintain a good credit rating and pay off your debts.

Paying off debts can be a student's worst nightmare. Thus, it is of utmost importance to make sure that you stay on top of your bills and credit card purchases. Make sure that you maintain a high credit rating to improve your ability in negotiating favorable interest rates for loans. Make sure you make paying off your debts a priority, so that you do not have to skimp on your retirement plans.

In conclusion, always start to plan early and explore different opportunities to ensure that you can have a safe, comfortable and happy retirement. Remember, it is never too early to start!



Offices and Resources on Campus

By Valentia Angelin

Finding the appropriate financial resources on campus can be daunting. Many students are unaware that there are different offices and resources at UCLA that are underutilized or unknown to students. It is important to familiarize yourself with these sources, as they can potentially help you in financing your college education and meeting your educational expenses. From ASUCLA to on-campus jobs, there are many options that you can consider to help you pay for school. Here are some of them:

Associated Students UCLA (ASUCLA)

Most students are aware that ASUCLA exists, but few know that it provides awards, scholarships and even textbook rentals to help students reduce costs of attending school. ASUCLA offers 3 different scholarships to students who excel academically and are in need. For more information about the different scholarships offered, you can visit

<http://legacy.asucla.ucla.edu/scholarships.asp>.

On top of that, the ASUCLA bookstore offers different ways that you can save on textbooks. By either buying digital or used versions or renting textbooks, you can save up to 60% off new textbook list price – a significant amount when you are considering the high prices of some of these textbooks. Alternatively, ASUCLA also offers a guaranteed buyback option for select textbooks, allowing you to sell the books back at the end of the quarter.

Financial Aid Office (FAO)

The FAO is set up to address financial needs and help students in meeting the increasing financial costs of attending UCLA. FAO is able to determine and offer the appropriate financial aid based on your needs and background. FAO assists students through a variety of means, such as scholarships, grants, work-study and loans. Students are not limited to just one type of financial aid, which means you can be eligible for a scholarship and work-study, or any combinations of the above. However, requirements vary for each different financial aid. For more information about

financial aid, you can either visit the office located on the A level of Murphy Hall or visit this website

<http://www.fao.ucla.edu/officeinfo.html>.

Improving Dreams Equality Access and Success (IDEAS)

IDEAS was set up to provide a network for undocumented students and support them by providing the right resources and support to improve their performance in higher education. IDEAS also provides mentorship to undocumented high school students as well as scholarships. The Reach Scholarship, which began in 2009, has awarded \$200,000 in scholarships to students in financial needs on campus. For more information about the scholarship and IDEAS, please visit their website www.ideasla.org/studentgroups.

Student Legal Services

The Student Legal Services provides convenient, accessible and affordable legal advice to the UCLA community. Located at 70 Dodd Hall, it can be a helpful resource if you face problems with your landlords, creditors, insurance companies or other entities and need an

experienced law practitioner to negotiate on your behalf.

The Student Legal Services can also help you in obtaining unemployment benefits, unpaid wages, health insurance issues and many more. The service can also help you craft a coordinated approach through multiple on-campus organizations that can help you solve your problems. More information about the resource can be found on www.studentlegal.ucla.edu

Employment Opportunities

UCLA is home to more than 31,000 employees, making it the seventh largest employer in Southern California. There are a variety of jobs that you can do while still attending school. ASUCLA, UCLA Library and UCLA Recreation are just some campus departments that have job openings for full-time UCLA students. Working on campus can be a good way to generate some income while still focusing on academics. Additionally, there are plenty of off-campus job opportunities available through BruinView.

There are many other campus organizations and offices that provide assistance and advice for students in financial need. The goal of all these

organizations is to help all students meet the financial requirements and stay in school. Make sure that you check out the full list of

resources here and don't miss out on these opportunities!
<http://www.studentincrisis.ucla.edu/resources.html>

