



**Conservation
Employees'
Credit Union**

Fall 2011



How Will You Pay For School?



Though everyone can agree that college is an investment in the future and a degree is more important now than ever, finding the best way to pay for higher education is another story. A recent Gallup survey revealed that families have to use a combination of income, borrowing, grants and scholarships to meet attendance costs – which have jumped 28 percent in two years. So, where will you start? Talk to Conservation Employees' Credit Union about our student loans and annual scholarships!

Conservation Employees' Credit Union awards four annual scholarships to our young members who plan to attend college on a full-time basis in the fall. Scholarship applications are mailed to eligible teens in the winter, and winners receive \$1,000 toward their education costs.

Even if you don't receive scholarships, you can still cover your college tuition with CECU Student Loans. We offer two repayment options and flexible terms ranging up to ten years, so you can pursue your dreams. Plus, our student loan interest rates are often lower than federal student loan options!

To learn more about these programs and services or to apply for your CECU Student Loan, visit www.cecunline.org.

Celebrate International Credit Union Day With CECU

Credit unions offer financial education, create opportunities for families, provide sound guidance and strengthen communities. As we encourage our members to build a strong financial foundation, we are also building a better world. It's why more than 184 million people worldwide are a part of the credit union difference, and it's what we'll celebrate on October 20, 2011.



Join us at the CECU office for International Credit Union Day, and enjoy time with your fellow CECU members along with a free hot dog lunch. If you can't make it, take time to tell a friend, coworker or dorm mate about your credit union experience. By sharing the credit union message, you can help the people around you build something better!

Choose The Best Card For You

When you think of credit cards, you might think of funny commercials featuring barbarians on vacation or how a random collection of items may become priceless. What those commercials don't include are the important details like interest rates, annual fees or due dates. Slick ads aside, how do you choose the cards that fit your needs? Here's what you'll really want to think about:

Interest Rate

The annual interest rate relates to the amount credit card companies will charge you to use their money, and it is listed on the card application as a percentage. The rate you'll pay depends upon your credit score and history, so young people without existing credit accounts or loans may struggle to find a low rate at first. However, as long as you do not have any negative reports on your credit history, you should not apply for any card that charges interest greater than 16%.

Fees & Penalties

Though nobody plans to make late payments or spend beyond the credit limit, it happens. Credit companies may slap a substantial fee on your bill, revoke rewards and increase your interest rate if you make a financial mistake. Be mindful of this when you shop for a card, so you can minimize the potential costs. In addition, be wary of annual fees – even if they're waived for the first year and you receive rewards for your purchases. The perks may not be worth what you'll pay in the long run, and plenty of companies still offer credit without the extra charges.

Convenience

Think about how you'll use your card, and choose an option that suits your financial habits. Check with the stores and restaurants you visit the most to determine which cards they'll accept. If you prefer to make payments or purchases electronically, make sure the card you select offers online service and additional security features for Internet use. Learn about the rewards you can earn, and decide whether you want cash back, travel perks, merchandise credits or just a great, low interest rate.

Still thinking about which card is best for you? Ignore the ads, and consider a Visa® Credit Card from Conservation Employees' Credit Union. Even first-time cardholders can enjoy low rates, personal service, great rewards and no extra fees. Visit www.cecunline.org to learn more about our credit options today!



Can Bring More Debt

Salon services for 75 percent less!
Restaurant deals for half off! Dream vacations with even dreamier prices!
Messages from daily deal websites like Groupon and LivingSocial make it seem like you're saving tons of money, but you could be buying in to a bunch of debt instead.

A recent study by daily deal research site Yipit revealed that as much as 15 percent of all daily deal coupons go unused, and many people are buying goods and services they don't even need! Though these offers may seem like a great way to save, don't buy before considering your budget. Purchasing a \$15 oil change is smart if you already planned to spend \$30 on car maintenance. However, making impulse buys on clothing, spa treatments and other extras will add up to a lot of debt rather than amazing savings.

Though we can't offer restaurant discounts, your CECU Teen Titans account can help you save more than those daily deals ever will. Set a budget, stick to it, and earn interest with the money you save! To learn more about budgeting or the financial tools CECU offers, call us at (573) 522-4000.

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You've Got More Connections

You Need More Protection

Facebook, online shopping, LinkedIn, Virtual Branch, Twitter and email make connecting with your friends, your company, your favorite stores and your accounts easier than ever. Unfortunately, these technologies also make your personal information more vulnerable than ever. In fact, U.S. Department of Justice data reveals that identity theft is the fastest growing crime in America, and people younger than age 29 seem to represent the most likely victims. How do you protect yourself and your personal information? Check out these tips:



- Don't use public Internet networks to conduct private business online. The connections at places like Panera, Starbucks and McDonalds are convenient, but not secure. Even if the websites you're visiting are secure and start with https://, tech-savvy people using the same public network can easily view your online activities and steal your information.
- Don't carry your Social Security Card in your wallet, and don't use your Social Security Number as an ID number. Instead, memorize your SSN, store your card in a safe place and ask to be assigned a random ID number on your driver's license, student card and other identification.
- Limit the information you reveal online, and use complicated passwords for all online accounts. Do not give out private information or account data on social networks, and update your passwords frequently to ensure greater safety.
- Handle sensitive documents appropriately to ensure your safety. This means shredding unwanted documents such as credit card applications, expired insurance forms and old statements or bills. Sign up for e-statements whenever possible to keep documents password-protected, and store hard copies in a secure location away from prying eyes.
- Never provide personal or account information to a person whose identity you cannot confirm. If you receive a call, text or email from someone claiming that there has been fraudulent activity on your account, do not respond directly. Instead, look up the correct number for the institution in question, and call them to sort out the issue.

www.cecunline.org



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