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Earn an A+ in handling your money at college

College days, as the saying goes, are the best days of your life. But, to make the most of those days, you may need to take a hard-nosed look at your finances. Consider these pointers.

Follow your money flow. Get a handle on your current situation by keeping track of how much you spend on everything. Track your spending for two to four weeks with a notebook or Quicken. This exercise, in itself, may help you to curb expenses. Plus, you'll be in a position to detect your spending patterns and wisely decide how to spend money on what you need, rather than what you want. If you're spending more than you can afford, make changes.

Get a plan. Look at your financial big picture and develop a budget. List your sources of income, including scholarships, loans, money from jobs and cash from parents, as well as expenses, such as books, groceries and entertainment. At the start of each month, estimate how much money you'll have coming in and where you need – and want – to spend it. Consider a weekly spending limit. And look ahead – if you have a hefty car insurance bill or a road trip planned, put some money aside now to help you pay for it when the time comes.

Get real. Although you can do what you want, without an endless supply of money, you can't afford to do everything you want. That means living within your means, making choices based on what things cost and being able, at times, to say to

yourself – and others – “no, I can't afford this.”

Also, be flexible. If you overspend your money on something you really want to do, then make up for it by spending less another time.

Master the art of cheap. No, you don't have to be a cheapskate to take advantage of the cheaper things in life. For instance, free or inexpensive campus activities, such as music festivals and sporting events, and student discounts at stores, restaurants and travel companies. Plus, it's OK to browse thrift stores, garage sales and classified ads for stuff you need, such as furniture and clothing.

Go mobile without an automobile. Consider options, such as public transportation or a bike. Car expenses, such as insurance, repairs, gas and parking, are a huge drain on the wallet.

Other miscellaneous ways to save. Learn to cook and to brown-bag healthy meals. Use your campus health center if you need to see a doctor or get prescriptions filled (these services are often free or discounted).

And shop around for the best prices on your textbooks by buying them online or used.

Sources: education-portal.com, bankrate.com, getrichslowly.org, thinkyourwaytowealth.com and yourcreditadvisor.com



DIVIDEND

January savings dividend

DECLARED DECEMBER 3, 2009

The **January 2010 Savings and IRA dividend**, declared 12/03/09, provides a Compounded Annual Percentage Yield of

2.00% APY

Dividends are paid on the last day of the month to accountholders who have maintained an average daily balance of \$100 or more. Savings dividend is subject to change monthly.

January checking dividend

DECLARED DECEMBER 8, 2009

The **January 2010 High Rate Checking dividend**, declared 12/08/09, provides a Compounded Annual Percentage Yield of

1.75% APY

Checking dividends are paid on the last day of each month to accountholders who meet the requirements of the account. Checking dividend is subject to change monthly.

YOU ASKED FOR GREATER 24/7 CONVENIENT ACCOUNT ACCESS AND WE LISTENED...

Mobile Banking is coming in early 2010!

Enjoy **safe and secure account access** and the ability to

- Check your account balances!
- Transfer funds!
- Conduct transaction searches!

Enroll in Alliant Online Banking now so you're ready when it gets here.

Not yet a user of Alliant Online Banking?

It's a breeze to get started. Click "Login" to Online Banking from the home page at www.alliantcreditunion.org/smart. Once on the Online Banking login page, click "New User, or Forgot Your Access Code?" and follow the prompts. To set your personal access code you'll need your Alliant Convenience Card, VISA® Debit Card or Alliant VISA® HSA Debit Card number. Otherwise, simply call our 24/7 Member Contact Center (800-328-1935) for assistance.

Working world 101

Ready or not, it's time – or soon will be time – for you to embark on your career. Here are some factoids that may help you get a perspective about today's working world.

- 21% of America's workforce is now composed of people in their early- to mid-20s.
- Just how much employers and Generation Y-ers will accommodate each other remains to be seen. More than their older counterparts, today's young employees expect their employers to provide expansive benefits and perks, according to an industry survey.* To help Generation Y-ers to become more happy, engaged and motivated on the job, 15% of employers have modified their policies (57% have implemented more flexible schedules and 33% have created new recognition and reward programs).*
- Employers may see you through the filter of their stereotypes. On the plus side, some employers recognize you as part of the most educated, tech-savvy and independent-minded generation ever. And they realize that you offer valuable traits that can benefit any organization.



Make that perception work for you, on job interviews and on the job, by reinforcing it with what you say and how you act. Conversely, some employers harbor the perception that Generation Y members are arrogant, self-centered and too easily bored. In fact, 87% of all HR professionals and hiring managers consider Generation Y to have an inordinate sense of entitlement.* Be prepared to counter these uncharitable perceptions by demonstrating your passion and commitment to doing great work and for going the extra mile.

- Employers may look to you to provide fresh thinking, a first-hand sense of what makes Generation Y tick (especially if their business markets to them) and tech-savvy shortcuts. For instance, *Fast Company* blogger Lindsey Pollak loves her Generation Y assistant because “she brings up things that never occur to me” and “has a natural facility with technology.” Public relations firm president Matt Doric adds, “Companies desperately want to be part of the Web 2.0/user generated content, MySpace, YouTube phenomenon. Who better to guide that shift than Gen Y.”

* survey conducted by CareerBuilder.com and Harris Interactive

Sources: *Fast Company*, Quintessential Careers, CareerBuilder.com and best-interview-strategies.com

Did you know you're an owner of Alliant Credit Union?

The difference between a credit union and a bank

Want to tell somebody how credit unions differ from banks? Here's how.

How can credit unions like ours offer unbeatable savings rates and below-market loans? What's involved is the basic significant difference in mission and operation between a credit union and a bank.

A bank is a for-profit business owned by shareholder investors. A measure of a bank's success is how much profit it makes from its customers and distributes to its shareholders. To maximize profits, banks pay lower rates on deposits, charge higher rates on loans, and assess more and higher fees.

Credit unions operate on a totally different principle. For one thing, when you join a credit union, you're not a customer – you're a member and an owner. Credit unions are not-for-profit cooperatives owned and operated for the benefit of their members. In a credit union, all income after expenses and capital reserves is distributed to its members. In fact, a credit union's mission is to maximize the returns to its members through high savings dividends, low loan rates and low fees.

In short, while banks take money from their customers, credit unions, such as Alliant Credit Union, make money for their members and give it back to them, too.

office closings
Alliant will be closed in observance of the following holidays:

Martin Luther King Jr. Day
– Monday, January 18

President's Day
– Monday, February 15

For your convenience, Alliant Online Banking, SST and ATMs will be available. Our 24/7 Member Contact Center at 800-328-1935 is also available.

Alliant Headquarters
11545 W. Touhy Avenue
Chicago, IL 60666

dial direct: Alliant is there when you need us

Alliant Member Contact Center
800-328-1935
24/7 personal assistance
TDD/TTY 773-462-2300

Self Service Telephone (SST)
800-482-5328
24/7 automated account access

VISA® Debit Card
800-328-1935

VISA® Credit Cards
24/7 Member Services/
Account Info/Lost or Stolen:
866-444-8529

VISA® Gift Card
Purchase: 800-328-1935
Support Center: 866-466-2362

Mortgage Hotline
800-365-7003
Mon–Fri, 6am–7pm CT
Sat, 8am–12pm CT

Auto/Home Insurance
888-380-9287
Mon–Fri, 6am–10pm CT
Sat, 6am–8pm CT

BALANCE™ Financial Fitness
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Mon–Thu, 7am–10pm CT
Fri, 7am–7pm CT
Sat, 10am–7pm CT

MEMBERS™ Financial Services
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(Representative located in
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Credit Card Payments
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City of Industry, CA 91716

**All Other Correspondence
including IRA and HSA deposits**
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Chicago, IL 60666-0945

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locations, Alliant Online Banking,
and product and service
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