



*DISCOVER THE POWER OF IDEAS*

## **UNT Students Prepare for Life After Graduation**

DENTON (UNT), Texas — Several University of North Texas students took advantage of the second session of information offered on Wednesday November 28 through the second annual Operation Graduation Workshop Series.

Operation Graduation is a three-day seminar series on money management, debt management, student loan repayment strategies and career development. It was free and open to all students. In fact, students received a free lunch along with the information they were given.

This event was sponsored by the Student Money Management Center, the Student Financial Aid and Scholarships, Student Legal Services, and the Career Center. A representative from each sponsoring office was present, with the exception of the Career Center (Day Three sponsor), to educate students of the free services they offer and how students could take advantage of them.

“To be successful, [students] need to educate themselves of what their responsibilities are,” said Paul F. Goebel, founding and managing director of the Student Money Management Center. “We want to put students in a position to be able to take full ownership of their financial lives – to become truly financially independent as informed adults.”

Among the topics discussed in this session of the second seminar were debt, student loans, credit reports and how to keep yourself legally safe when purchasing a car, renting an apartment or ending your lease.

“Always do a walk-through of the apartment with your landlord,” said Kathryn McCauley, director of student legal services.

She also gave advice on what a student should do before buying a car and advised that students may be better off waiting to purchase a new car immediately following graduation if they will be facing a significant level of debt.

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It is always in the best interest of students to gain advice from a trusted mechanic when purchasing a new or used vehicle. “A mechanic’s check is an excellent and nominal investment to ensure the condition of the vehicle before you make a final purchasing decision,” McCauley said.

Money is a big concern for college students and the session held on Wednesday was to inform students how to save money and not fall into debt. It has been estimated that nearly eighty percent of students on campus are reliant on financial aid or student loans, Goebel said.

That’s where Jon Berry came in. He works in the office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships. Berry informed students on when they would have to pay back student loans and said there are different payment plans to help pay back loans. He spoke of the option of student loan consolidation and the benefits and risks of such a decision. If students choose to consolidate their loans, they should do federal consolidation, Berry recommended.

As the session came to an end, the presenters answered questions and told students to make appointments with their specific offices so that they can take advantage of their services before they graduate. The three representatives all agreed that most students are not familiar with the depth of student services available on campus offered throughout the school year as part of their student services fee.

“I went yesterday to make an appointment with the Career Center after the first session,” said Tatyana Yablokova, Russia senior, during the meeting. Although she didn’t have any student loans herself, she went to the second meeting because her boyfriend told her the information provided at the session was very useful. “I liked that it’s such a laid back atmosphere,” Yablakova said. “You don’t feel scared to ask questions or anything.”

Operation Graduation has been offered every semester since the series inception in the Fall of 2006 and will be redesigned as a one day “boot camp” session next semester, Goebel said.

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