Midwestern University students face important and challenging personal and financial decisions throughout their enrollment and after graduation. Sensible Strategies has been developed by the Office of Student Financial Services to provide students with multiple programs aimed at helping them build a strong foundation to handle complex financial decisions. Sensible Strategies includes a variety of opportunities to learn more about financial decision-making through the use of presentations and workshops that include one-on-one and group discussions, special events hosted with external financial professionals and web-based tools to develop financial strategies and a personal repayment plan. All of the presentations, workshops, events and extra credit resources are provided without charge.
Presentations and Workshops:

**Orientation:**

During our orientation presentations, students learn more about financial literacy, the “Thrifty Budget”, and smart borrowing, and become acquainted with the extensive resources developed to assist them at Midwestern University and beyond. Through these focused efforts, within the broader context of the orientation presentations, new students are actively encouraged to participate in the events throughout their years at Midwestern University.

**Budgeting Basics:**

This workshop explores the differences between needs and wants, and how making hard choices now about spending can make a significant difference in the long term. In most cases, “single” students can live comfortably during the academic year on their standard cost of attendance budget; married students face a different set of challenges. This fun, interactive workshop is designed to help all students become thoughtful, informed consumers who are fully aware of basic budgeting techniques and empower them to make smart, long-term decisions. The “Thrifty Budget” concept is explored, allowing participants to review and consider the long-term impact of responsible borrowing. Participants are challenged to consider their spending habits and review their expenses on a monthly basis. All attendees receive helpful handouts during the workshop.

**Managing Your Loan Portfolio with iontuition™:**

Knowing and understanding your portfolio of loans (including those acquired in undergraduate or other graduate programs) is essential to effective and manageable repayment. This workshop focuses students on the planning tools and techniques within iontuition™ to evaluate the impact of additional borrowing, plan for repayment and develop a practical strategy to repay all loans: FFELP, Federal Direct, private and institutional.

**Credit Basics:**

Understanding the basics of credit is essential for healthcare professionals for both personal and business reasons. This workshop focuses on the differences between a credit report and a credit score, the factors that constitute a credit score, how the factors contribute to the score, how to improve one’s credit, how to secure a free copy of one’s credit report, and so forth. Over a period of years, this information can be extremely useful in building and managing one’s personal credit.
Couples and Finances:

Pursuing a graduate degree while married presents some unique challenges for students and their families. Many times, issues arise when the spouse is working (or not working), when the couple has children, or when the couple has relocated to campus from another region of the country. This workshop, delivered by Student Services, addresses many of these issues and other challenges couples face. Strategies to openly identify, discuss, and resolve money management differences are discussed.
Presentations and Workshops:

**Real Estate Basics:**

This workshop provides students with essential information they will need when they embark on their professional careers and consider purchasing real estate. Topics include the basics of home purchasing, pre-qualification for a loan, searching for the right property, completing the loan application, the loan approval process, and finally, the closing. With the recovering real estate markets across the country, our students will be far better informed when they make one of the largest financial commitments of their lives.

**Midpoint:**

This presentation is designed to help students understand budget expense items for the upcoming year(s) and to encourage students to review their borrowing and expenses when they are approximately halfway through their academic program. In many instances, students are not fully aware of their current debt, or of the course they are on to complete their programs. Through practical tips on budgeting, planning, and evaluating their projected financial position, students can make changes to positively impact their future. iontuition™ and its tracking, monitoring, and planning features are key elements included in the presentation.

**Institutional Loan:**

Critical information is provided to Federal Perkins and Primary Care Loan (PCL) borrowers, as well as MWU Institutional loan borrowers in these workshops presented in conjunction with the Institutional Loan staff. Selected topics include deferments, forbearance, cancellation options, working with our servicer, ECSI, contact information, and the consequences of default.
Identity Theft Prevention:

Identity theft continues to be one of the fastest growing crimes in the United States and has been ranked as one of the top consumer concerns. This workshop provides students with information on how to protect their personal information from being stolen, when and where most information is stolen, and how they can prevent identity theft from happening and what to do if they discover their information has been stolen.

Financial Planning:

What financial responsibilities lie ahead in school and after graduation? Students will learn about managing finances, investing, and saving for retirement. This workshop will also discuss options for different types of insurance, college funding and estate planning. It is never too early to put a strategy into play to maximize options and develop a plan of action.
Special Events:

**Armed Forces Day:**
This event focuses on the opportunities open to Midwestern University students to participate in the military scholarship and loan repayment programs. The scholarship options between the Army, Navy and Air Force, along with their specific medical fields of interest, are highlighted. Practicing military healthcare professionals attend as a means of clarifying the roles they play and the critical support they provide to our armed forces and the nation. Additionally, they provide insights on life in the armed forces.

**Financial Experts Forums:**
The Forum provides students with direct access to a panel of practicing healthcare professionals, bankers, real estate experts and financial planning professionals so that the experts can share their real-life experiences and knowledge. While structured in an open-ended Q & A format, plenty of time is left for individual discussions with the experts at the conclusion of the forum.

**Constitution Day:**
Constitution Day, federally observed on September 17th, commemorates the U.S. Constitution. Educational programs and activities on the Constitution are celebrated the week of September 17-23.

**Scholarship Days:**
The event highlights the MWU Financial Literacy, Spirit of Service and many other scholarship opportunities available to students. Students are invited to learn more about the scholarship programs, have questions answered, and complete applications prior to the deadlines.

**Financial Aid Awareness Month:**
Outreach events during the month of February promote and provide resources, tips and awareness to students for the upcoming academic year. Resources include understanding financial aid options and learning about how to apply for financial aid, student billing, financial planning and much more. These resources will help students better understand and assess all of their options.
Additional Resources:

_iontuition™:_

_iontuition™_ is a web-based tool that helps students manage their student loan portfolio. Each student has access to a personalized profile showing their federal student loan and grant information. Students can opt to receive loan status notifications via email or text message and download the _iontuition™_ app (iOS and Android) to receive reminders on their mobile device.

_iontuition.com_ users also have access to loan counselors via the site’s LIVE HELP chat feature and a refreshable dashboard that shows your loan status, balances, payment amounts, payment due dates and interest accrual information as well as lender/servicer contacts. Additional features include calculators that help to run payment optimization, income-based repayment and consolidation scenarios, budgeting tools, cloud storage for important student loan documents and much more. This tool is available at no cost to MWU students and graduates.

_MyFreeTaxes:_

Working with the United Way and IRS, the MyFreeTaxes partnership provides free federal and state tax preparation and filing assistance for qualified Midwestern University students. It’s easy, safe, secure and 100 percent free; participants can file up to three state returns without charge.

_Social Media:_

The Office of Student Financial Services uses social media as a way to provide students the most up-to-date information on events and topics of interest. Look for us on our social media sites at:

- [MidwesternUniversityFinancialAidAZ](https://www.facebook.com/MidwesternUniversityFinancialAidAZ)
- [MidwesternUniversityFinancialAidIL](https://www.facebook.com/MidwesternUniversityFinancialAidIL)
- [@MWUSFS](https://twitter.com/MWUSFS)
Office of Student Financial Services

Downers Grove Campus
555 31st Street
Downers Grove, Illinois 60515
Phone: 630.515.6101
Fax: 630.515.6384
Email: ilfinaid@midwestern.edu

Glendale Campus
19555 North 59th Avenue
Glendale, Arizona 85308
Phone: 623.572.3321
Fax: 623.572.3283
Email: azfinaid@midwestern.edu