

**WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for May 10, 2021**  
**Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.**

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, & Healthy Relationships we'll talk about student finances and look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

Finances have been top of mind for me the past couple of weeks. I've been teaching the "Real Money. Real World." program to about 60 junior students at the Coshocton County Career Center and 80 sophomore students at Coshocton High School. We discuss all sorts of financial topics, but the focus is budgeting our spending for a family.

I share with the students right up front that even though I work for a university, not everyone needs to go to college to have a good career. I also share that I strongly believe, and the statistics suggest, that some type of additional education or technical certification after high school graduation increases the potential for income over time. Students at the Career Center especially get this, and they are proud to tell me about the types of certifications they are going to leave with upon graduation.

There are many philosophies out there about the purpose of college. Since I work for one, I probably think about this more often than most people. It is more than being prepared for the workforce. I once heard a professor from another midwestern university share that someone goes to college to learn to "think like." If you want to be a doctor, you go to college to think like a doctor. Engineers to think like engineers, social workers to think like social workers. You get the picture.

The emphasis is not the skills or even the knowledge. The overall goal is to approach problem solving, creativity, and work ethic especially as it pertains to that career. Of course, once we enter the workforce our employers and fellow employees begin to shape the way we think as well. But the foundation is laid long before our first job.

I wonder how many students currently have this attitude at universities and colleges. Focused on getting the best long-term frame of mind rather than getting the best grades or best college experience. That can go a long way in determining whether the cost of college or any kind of advanced technical degree is really worth it.

According to Experian (one of the three credit bureaus), student loan debt is at a new high. It is interesting to note that all types of debt have seen changes during the pandemic. Credit card debt decreased significantly, while mortgage borrowing increased significantly. But of all types of debt, students loans have recently increased at the largest annual growth rate. Since 2019, the overall student loan balance has increased by 12 percent.

2020 marked the record high for student loan debt at \$1.57 trillion. That means that the balance per consumer is \$38,792. Members of Gen X – those of us currently 41-56 years old – still have an average individual balance of just over \$45,095. I shudder at that number. I have received many blessings in my life, and I humbly give God all the glory for them. One of the greatest gifts was being awarded a scholarship that resulted in graduating with my Bachelor of Science degree debt free.

As I talked with these dozens of students over the past few days, I was impressed with how many of them took the spending simulation activity seriously. They were to imagine they were 27 years old with a family and a job. As they paid their bills and watched their income wane, I heard comments like “How do my parents do this?” So my challenge today- if you are a parent or grandparent, please talk with your children about how you do this and listen to their concerns and worries for their future. These are the life lessons they need from you.

Now let’s take a look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension. The ServSafe® Manager Food Safety Training series will be offered on Thursdays, July 8, 15, and 22 from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., with the proctored exam July 29 at 9:00 a.m. A separate ServSafe® Person-in-Charge certification training will be Monday, August 2 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Pre-registration is required at [coshocton.osu.edu](https://coshocton.osu.edu).

The “East Ohio Women in Agriculture Program Series” continues this Thursday, May 13 with “Veterinarians: Building a Relationship & Knowing When to Call.” Visit our website to register for one or more of these free programs or to find a link to past recorded programs as well.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help improve our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at [coshocton.osu.edu](https://coshocton.osu.edu). Make it a healthy day!