

Contact:

Mike Weber, VP Marketing
Credit Union Student Choice
mweber@studentchoice.org
563-599-1193

Colleen Twinem, VP Operations
Everett Credit Union
ctwinem@everettcu.org
617-389-9000 ext 221

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College Planning Seminar Draws Huge Audience for Everett Credit Union

Record Turnout Underscores Consumer Demand for Assistance with College Planning and Financing

Everett, MA (January 18, 2010)—Deciding how to pay for college has always been an important topic for students and families. But in light of increasing costs and the financial hardships brought on by today's challenging economic times, the topic has taken on a more urgent tone for many consumers.

With that need in mind, Everett Credit Union (ECU) in Everett, MA recently worked with its student lending partner, *Credit Union Student Choice*, to deliver a college planning seminar to a packed high school auditorium filled with more than 200 students and parents.

“Financial education is a core part of our mission and providing expert resources in the area of college financial planning is vital to our community,” said Colleen Twinem, ECU Vice President of Operations. “We realize that preparing and paying for college is a confusing and stressful process for families. We’ve never had so many people attend a seminar and it’s wonderful to shed some much-needed light on the overall process.”

According to Twinem, the seminar covered not only financing options such as grants, scholarships, and student loans, but also the importance of developing smart habits to ensure college readiness and success.

“You could literally see the light bulb go on for many people as they started to understand their options and come to the realization that a higher education is not out of reach,” said Twinem. “The feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive. In fact, at the end of the seminar the high school guidance counselor even asked when we could schedule another one.”

Delivering the presentation was Melissa Hunt, VP of Client Relations and Education at Credit Union Student Choice, a credit union service organization (CUSO) that provides turn-key private student lending services to nearly 100 credit unions nationwide.

“In conjunction with our partner credit unions, I’ve had the pleasure of delivering more than 50 college planning seminars over the last 12 months,” said Hunt. “Nearly every credit union with whom I’ve worked has mentioned that this seminar has been the most highly attended of any seminar they’ve ever offered. Parents and students are understandably scared right now, and it’s incredibly rewarding to help

them make sense of the financial aid process.”

Twinem points out that the credit union first began planning the seminar shortly after launching the *Student Choice* private student lending program in June 2009.

“We realized that this type of financial education was in high demand, and that it would help us truly connect with young adults and families in our community,” said Twinem. “And most importantly, it will help these consumers make good financial and life decisions, something like that will help us all in the long run.”

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About Credit Union Student Choice

Credit Union Student Choice is a credit union service organization (CUSO) founded in 2008 by several of the nation's leading credit unions and CUSOs. Credit Union Student Choice positions credit unions as leaders in education financing in the 21st century by redefining value for student borrowers and helping credit unions connect with new Gen Y members. The Student Choice network enables credit unions of all asset sizes and fields of membership to make private student loans that may be held on their own balance sheet to recognize the long-term economic return of the loan relationship versus a one-time referral fee. The CUSO helps credit unions by managing many of the challenges and risks commonly associated with student lending. Since launching in May 2008 with seven credit union partners, the CUSO has now grown to serve nearly 100 credit unions across the country. It was also recognized in 2009 as a co-recipient of the prestigious NACUSO Collaboration and Innovation Award. To learn more or find out how your credit union can participate, visit www.studentchoice.org or call 800-237-5678 and ask for a Credit Union Student Choice representative.