

Most likely the costs of your high school education were small in comparison to what it will cost you to attend college. If you attended a public high school, neither you nor your family directly paid tuition costs to support your education. Also, living with and being supported by your family meant that you had relatively few regular expenses. You may have had to pay for your car payment, insurance, phone bill, and personal entertainment – and through a part-time job you may have earned more than enough money to finance your spending.



Attending college may prove to be a different experience for you. There are regular tuition costs, book costs, lab fees, housing costs, as well as the other expenses you may have brought with you such as car payments and insurance. Becoming aware of your financial responsibilities and planning to meet them can bring with it a sense of security. **Living within your means – means living within your budget.**

There are many ways to learn to budget your income, most include the following basic steps:

1. Evaluate your overall income – how much money per month or per semester do you have to spend?
2. Record your expenses - how much do you spend and what do you spend it on? Be sure to include costs for housing, food, entertainment, car, gasoline, credit card payment, phone, junk food, clothes, and personal items. Estimate these expenses on either a monthly or semester basis. Be honest and complete.
3. Put it on Paper – Compare what comes in with what goes out. Identify where you can cut back, and then resist the temptation to overspend.
4. Balance your spending to match your income - Pay your 'must items' first (rent, car payments, phone etc). Then budget to spend only what is left – not more!
5. DO NOT USE CREDIT CARDS!!!! – the interest you will end up paying will often nearly double the cost of the item.