Take Charge America Breaks Down Dorm Room Necessities; Helps Students Save More Money

Nonprofit credit counseling agency outlines budget busters common to new college students

PHOENIX – (July 29, 2014) – As summer winds down, incoming freshman are getting ready for their first year of college. In addition to picking a major and registering for classes, many are preparing to live on their own for the first time. It’s exciting – but can be an expensive too.

“In past years, students used to live on ramen noodles and dorm rooms were sparse at best, but that’s no longer the case,” said Mike Sullivan, director of education for Take Charge America, a national non-profit credit counseling and student loan counseling agency. “Today, retailers aggressively target freshman to advertise dorm-room ‘necessities,’ but students are wise to minimize spending, especially if they’re borrowing money for college.”

To help students keep costs in check, Sullivan outlines seven tips for determining what to bring to college, and what to leave behind.

1. **Consult your housing office:** Before buying a new toaster or candles, students should contact their housing office to fully understand rules and regulations. Many residence halls don’t allow toasters, hotplates, halogen bulbs, air conditioners, candles, waterbeds and extension cords.

2. **Team-up with your roommate:** Few dorms are large enough for multiple appliances. Students should wait and coordinate major purchases with their roommate.

3. **Pack the basics:** Most dorm rooms include a bed, desk, mirror and trash can, and students must bring other essentials including linens, toiletries, pantry basics, cleaning supplies and a first-aid kit. If an item isn’t used on a daily or weekly basis, consider leaving it back home.

4. **Decorate – wisely:** Students want to make their dorm rooms their own, but this doesn’t require significant spending. Framed photos, posters and a houseplant add a homey touch to any space, but it’s wise to skip the fancier furnishings and redirect funds toward tuition and books.

5. **Scour sales:** Students can find low prices on linens and dishes at discount stores and yard sales. They can also reap savings with price-comparison apps or online auctions.

6. **Stock your kitchen:** Dorms don’t offer much of a kitchen, but a mini-refrigerator, pantry and microwave will go a long way in cutting dining out expenses.

7. **Utilize campus amenities:** Students who use campus fitness centers, library movie rentals, intramural sports, student clubs and on-campus entertainment will save money while also enriching
their college experience.

For more financial tips, visit www.takechargeamerica.org.

About Take Charge America, Inc.

Founded in 1987, Take Charge America, Inc. is a nonprofit agency offering financial education and counseling services including credit counseling, debt management, student loan counseling, housing counseling and bankruptcy counseling. It has helped more than 1.6 million consumers nationwide manage their personal finances and debts. To learn more, visit www.takechargeamerica.org or call (888) 822-9193.

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