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Financial Literacy from the Classroom to the Workplace

URBANA, IL – A class in the University of Illinois Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics is taking students beyond the textbook by challenging them to make presentations on financial education.

“The first two-thirds of the class, we dealt with topics like financial statements, interest, insurance, and estate planning,” explained Urvi Neelakantan, the assistant professor who offers ACE 445—Intermedial Personal Financial Planning. She is also an affiliate of the U of I Center for Economic and Financial Education.

“In the last third, we go into the real world.”

This is the fourth year Neelakantan has offered the course which currently has 32 students enrolled.

“Almost all of the students are seniors which means they will be working in the field shortly,” she explained.

The U of I Center for Economic and Financial Education is currently developing a workplace financial education program for employers. Neelakantan’s students’ presentation will focus on that topic.

“The goal of the Center’s program is to educate employees on key financial planning topics like budgeting, credit management, saving and investing, financing a college education, retirement and estate planning, risk and insurance, and housing,” she said. “These are financial concepts that every consumer needs to know.”

The students are developing PowerPoint presentations, a handout, and financial worksheets/activities.

“I’ve asked the students to design a financial module that could potentially be included in this new program,” she said.

The presentations will be reviewed by professors with expertise in the topics and representatives from the financial services industry.

“Potentially, the students’ work could become part of a national education program,” she said.

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