Dear Furman Senior Class of 2010:

We are living in unprecedented times financially and otherwise. There is more economic uncertainty facing all of us than in any other time in our lifetimes. At times such as these, it is easy to simply let the overwhelming tide take hold and take us where it will; however, we will all come through the current crisis. In fact, each of us is likely to grow in ways that we cannot imagine.

When the dust does finally settle, you will be exposed to a financial landscape that will require knowledge and personal responsibility. Your generation is the first that will have to fund your retirement completely. More generally, most college graduates are ill-prepared to make the most basic financial decisions, yet they are required to do so from the moment they graduate. Whether the decisions are to enroll in a 401(k) and how to invest those funds or how to purchase life, health, or disability insurance, your decisions now can have a profound impact on your long-term financial stability.

In response to these needs, Furman University’s Center for Corporate and Professional Development is offering a special Individual Financial Planning seminar series to Furman Seniors during the 2010 spring semester at Furman. The series consists of six sessions (2 ½ hours each) geared directly towards upcoming graduates. This series is not meant to make anyone an expert, but it does provide the basis for making more informed decisions upon graduation, even if that decision is to get professional help when making these critical financial decisions.

**Session 1: Budgeting**
The most critical aspect of any enterprise that has income and expenses is to effectively match expenses with income. Historically, Americans have spent more than they have made, making the process of planning for kids’ college education, car purchases, retirement, vacations, and many other big ticket items next to impossible. The monthly budget is the basic foundation—so, individuals and families need to ensure that they do not spend more than they make. Only when you begin to live within your means can you gain a handle on planning for the future. This seminar will outline what a budget is and is not, provide tips for identifying and tracking expenses, walk through the process of identifying income and expenses, and discuss the need for an emergency fund and how to achieve it.

**Session 2: Managing Credit**
While budgeting is the foundation of the personal financial planning process, understanding how to manage credit (or not use it at all if possible) is the next step to financial security. Our nation is the largest borrowing nation on the planet. Most people carry very expensive credit card debts, have car loans, and home mortgages. In most cases, we buy more than we need and more than we can afford. This seminar will help you understand the cost of such activity and outline ways to minimize debt. The primary way to “handle” debt is to pay it off, which will require strong discipline that is aided by the budgeting process.
Session 3: A Primer on Risk and Return.
This seminar will introduce you to the concepts of risk and return as they apply to investments, mutual funds, and retirement planning. Topics covered include: defining risk, basic measures of risk, the concept of diversification, and applying diversification to your investments.

Session 3: Mutual Funds
Even just 20 years ago, people thought that “investing” was only for the wealthy. In today’s world, almost every adult is (or should be) thinking about investing. This is due in large part to the fact that we are having to fund our own retirements through individualized retirement accounts like IRA’s, Roth IRA’s, 401(k)’s and the like. This seminar will cover the basics of mutual funds, why they are the best investment vehicle for most individual investors, and discuss factors you should and shouldn’t use when making mutual fund choices.

Session 4: Retirement Planning
This may be the single biggest area that most Americans fall short in their personal financial health. Some put off planning for retirement because it seems so far in the future; some believe that Social Security will provide adequate income for retirement; some believe they don’t have the money or skills to plan for retirement. This seminar will focus on why it is critical for each of us to save for retirement, introduce people to ways of estimating future expenses for retirement, and the most common investment products available for retirement savings. Additionally, we will look at some websites that have retirement planning tools for you to consistently monitor your progress.

Session 5: Risk Management
While Americans fall short with their retirement planning, they know that retirement is coming and generally know that they should plan for retirement. In contrast, with the exception of life insurance, people tend to overlook the broader area of risk management (i.e., protecting what you have in the event of a catastrophic event). Of the risk management items overlooked most commonly is disability insurance. There is a significantly higher risk that someone will have a long-term disability than experience premature death, but most people do not carry long-term disability insurance. Additionally, we often purchase more life insurance than we need or the wrong type of insurance. This seminar will look at how to manage the risk, in a way that is most economical to the individual, that you will become disabled or die prematurely.
About the Presenter

Dr. Tom Smythe is an Associate Professor of Business and Accounting at Furman who teaches finance. He has been at Furman as a teacher for seven years, and also graduated from Furman in 1985. He served four years in the Army and worked for Mobil Oil for seven years prior to returning to school at the University of South Carolina where he earned his Ph.D. in finance. His specialty area is mutual funds. Dr. Smythe often appears in the local media as a business expert. His work and/or his opinions have been presented in USA Today, The Wall Street Journal, The Financial Times, CNNmoney, Time, Consumer Reports, Money, Reuters, and The Chicago Tribune.

I hope that you will register for this informative Continuing Education program. To register, please complete and return the attached registration form.

Sincerely,

Brad Bechtold, Ed.D.
Director, Continuing Education
Furman University
Greenville, S.C. 29613
Office: (864) 294-3136
Fax: (864) 294-3378
Registration Form
Center for Corporate and Professional Development
“Individual Financial Planning Seminar Series”

3 Easy Ways to Register: Mail, Fax or Phone
To register, please choose 1 of 2 class sections and return this form along with the seminar series registration fee of $299.00 to The Center for Corporate and Professional Development, Furman University, 3300 Poinsett Highway, Greenville, S.C. 29613. You may also register by FAX at (864) 294-3378 or by phone through Karey Harrison at (864) 294-2154.

Class Section 1:
-Meets from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. for six consecutive Mondays in Furman Hall 106
-January 25th, February 1st, February 8th, February 15th, February 22nd, and March 1st.

Class Section 2:
-Meets from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. for six consecutive Wednesdays in Furman Hall 106
-January 27th, February 3rd, February 10th, February 17th, February 24th, and March 3rd.

Please indicate your choice of class section by checking appropriate box below:

_____Class 1 (Mondays, 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m) OR
_____Class 2 (Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m)

-Enrollment is limited to 32 students per each class section.

Parent’s Name & Address & Telephone Number
____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Student’s Name & Address & Telephone Number
____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Method of Payment
Check ________________________________
VISA or Master Card ________________________________
Name on Card_____________________________
Expiration Date_____________________________
Signature_____________________________

Notes: Withdrawals- Course fee less $25 may be refunded if a written request for withdrawal is received 14 days prior to the seminar. Students must remain with their class section throughout.