**Let’s Talk Money: New Updates & Equity Data With The Money Management Center 176**

00:00:00 **Lisa**

Come to one of our booths that we have and ask our students some questions, engage in conversation with them, and then make that next step to go to a workshop and maybe do a financial counseling session with me.

00:00:11 **Lisa**

We're here to support you and help you to elevate you. While you're here for free to help you to move forward, we want you to get through classes, we want you to get through Mt. SAC onto your next schools in life and we want you to be successful.

00:00:25 **Christina**

Hi, I'm Christina Barsi.

00:00:27 **Sun**

And I'm Sun Ezzel, and you're listening to the Magic Mountie Podcast.

00:00:31 **Christina**

Our mission is to find ways to keep your ear to the ground, so to speak - by bringing to you the activities and events you may not have time to attend, the resources on campus you might want to know more about, the interesting things your colleagues are creating, and the many ways we can continue to better help and guide our students.

00:00:48 **Sun**

We bring to you the voices of Mt. SAC, from the classroom to completion.

00:00:51 **Speaker 1**

And I know I'm going to achieve my goals and I know people here are going to help me to do it.

00:00:56 **Speaker 2**

She is a sociology major and she's transferring to Cal Poly, Pomona! Psychology major, English major ...

00:01:02 **Sun**

From transforming part-time into full-time-

00:01:05 **Speaker 1**

I really liked the time that we spent with Julie about how to write a CV and a cover letter.

00:01:12 **Christina**

Or just finding time to soak in the campus.

00:01:15 **Speaker 1**

To think of the natural environment around us as a library.

00:01:18 **Christina**

We want to keep you informed and connected to all things Mt. SAC, but most importantly, we want to keep you connected with each other. I'm Christina Barsi, Mt. SAC alumni and producer of this podcast.

00:01:29 **Sun**

And I'm Sun Ezzell, Learning Assistant Faculty and Professional Learning Academy Coordinator.

00:01:34 **Christina**

And this is the Magic Mountie Podcast.

00:01:41 **Sun**

Welcome back to the podcast, this is your host Sun Ezzell. In this week's episode, I welcome Lisa Amos, Professor of Family Consumer Sciences and Faculty Coordinator of the Money Management Center back to the podcast to share updates and equity data as well as an invitation to the campus community. Enjoy!

00:01:59 **Sun**

Welcome back to the Magic Mountie Podcast, I'm so pleased to be here today with Lisa Amos, Professor of Family Consumer Sciences and Faculty Coordinator of the Mountie Money Management Center funded by Mt. SAC's Title V Grant, welcome to the podcast.

00:02:21 **Lisa**

Thank you, thanks for having me today, Sun.

00:02:23 **Sun**

I'm so glad that you could come back and talk with us again. We talked about a year ago when you were just getting ready to open the Mountie Money Management Center, and I know you have a lot to share with us today.

00:02:34 **Sun**

But first I was wondering, just in case any listeners didn't hear the previous episode, if you might share a little bit about yourself and your work at Mt. SAC, a little bit about what led you to doing the work with the Mountie Money Management Center?

00:02:49 **Lisa**

Absolutely, thanks for asking, I appreciate that. So, I guess one of the things is I've been at Mt. SAC for almost 22 years now, between part-time teaching and full-time teaching. And when I was hired as a full-time faculty member, one of my dream goals was to have what at that time, I was thinking would be called a Consumer Resource Center, but a center where students could work to elevate their money skills, to help them get unstuck, to help them to stay in school and to move forward.

00:03:14 **Lisa**

And so, it stayed just a dream of mine because it really wasn't a goal because I didn't have money and I didn't have support to do it because you got to have people, you got to have money to make that happen.

00:03:23 **Lisa**

And so, then when the Title V Grant was coming into being with the application for it, I got asked to participate in the creation of the proposal and was very thrilled not only that we got the grant early, like the first round, and that the money management elements to that got accepted. So, that was super exciting.

00:03:34 **Lisa**

So, then I got selected as the faculty coordinator for the Mountie Money Management Center and we launched the center in spring, actually February 21st, 2021. So, we launched it during COVID, everything was virtual, it was interesting. One nice thing about all of it was that students were looking for information, they were looking to connect, and so they found a space with us with all of that.

00:04:10 **Lisa**

So, since we opened a little over two years ago, we've been offering workshops weekly. I'm an accredited financial counselor in addition to being faculty here at the college and teaching, and so I offer financial counseling sessions with students. So, I work with students all the time helping them to strategize, set goals, get unstuck with their finances, get bills paid, get debts paid off and things like that.

00:04:32 **Lisa**

Sometimes I just sit and work with people and help them to understand how this bill - "What the heck is on this bill, I don't understand it?" So, working with them to understand things and to elevate their money management skills.

00:04:42 **Lisa**

I also have a team of people that work with me, our student ambassadors and they do a lot of outreach. We have booths almost every day that we're open. We're only open four days a week, half days because we are funded through a grant. But it's really awesome because the students then get to be there and interact with other students and other college employees as well, like just our booths, we do.

00:05:01 **Lisa**

But we also booth with events like Cash for College and just recently we booth with the Basic Needs Resource Fair and we've done things like ... the big one that was just recently, which was the vocational and career event that was put on by high school outreach and that was really fun event, and we're going to be doing a lot of other ones. We've done a lot and we're going to be doing a lot more going forward.

00:05:21 **Lisa**

So, great ways for us to reach students and we do weekly workshops on topics from a variety including investing is a hot topic. Credit not a hot topic but super important. And so, that is one that needs to become a hot topic so we can get credit wisely, use credit wisely.

00:05:39 **Lisa**

We talk about budgeting, we talk about home buying and renting, and all kinds of different topics with our workshops. And we also have a book lending library that's all money management-related books, and so you can stop by the Money Management Center.

00:05:51 **Lisa**

We are actually quietly shifting away from Mountie Money Management Center to the Mt. SAC Money Management Center. So, you can stop by the Money Management Center in building 77, room 1055 and borrow one of our books to read. And we don't have as strict of due dates as the library does, it gives you a little bit more flexibility to borrow.

00:06:11 **Sun**

That's great, it sounds like so many resources for students and that you're out on campus where folks can find you easily and some really great pairings with other events happening on campus. I think the last time we talked you felt like the center was just getting started and I was wondering if you could share a little bit about how is the center growing and changing and responding to the needs of students over the last year or so?

00:06:36 **Lisa**

Oh, that's a great question and a great great prompt there. Referrals from students that we've already worked with and people are like, "Hey, I heard you have such and such, I heard you're doing this, or doing that." And they'll stop by just to connect for a little bit.

00:06:47 **Lisa**

The word is getting out more and more. We are still kind of a hidden center because we are on the first floor, kind of at the basement almost floor building 77, and so you have to look to find us. So, that's why we tend to be out and about as much as we can, so that visibility has helped.

00:07:00 **Lisa**

I would say we don't reach a lot of students when we do the workshops, we would like to reach more (hint hint), so come join us for the workshops. By the way, everything we do is free and I think maybe sometimes people think that because of some of the services we provide, that there's a charge for them - everything we do is for free because we're funded through the Title V Grant.

00:07:18 **Lisa**

But yes, I guess the biggest thing that's happened for us, the biggest growth thing for us is the networking with other entities. A new one for us just made a connection with NASA, the Native American Student Association and so we are looking forward to coordinating with them to whatever it is that they're needing from us. A workshop or just an hour or time to collaborate and answer questions and such. But we've been doing a lot more, especially with other student services programs, so that's been the big part there.

00:07:45 **Sun**

That sounds really great, and you mentioned with the hint hint that you'd like more folks joining the workshops. Maybe for folks who are listening, Mt. SAC, classified or managers or faculty, do you have any asks for those folks in terms of helping students make connections with the Money Management Center?

00:08:02 **Lisa**

Great question. Please market what we're doing with your students and please know that what we do, you are welcome to be a part of as well. The Zoom workshops are in the evenings, there's not a set day every week, we vary just because we know that people's schedules vary.

00:08:15 **Lisa**

The other thing with that is that if there's an area of expertise or an area of interest that you have and that you would like to share with others, we would love to have guest presenters as well. So, give me a holler and would love to connect with you to have you host a workshop or maybe even co-host a workshop, that would be awesome too.

00:08:33 **Sun**

That's great and can you give any examples, have you had any guest presenters yet or what kinds of topics are you hoping folks might volunteer to share?

00:08:42 **Lisa**

So, we have had a consistent guest presenter, her name is Professor Lonnie Wynn. She used to be a mortgage broker in a previous life before teaching, and so she does our mortgage 101 workshop for us every semester, so we're thrilled to have her.

00:08:56 **Lisa**

But some of the other workshops we do, like we do workshops on credit and renting and car buying. So, if you're having car buffs out there, car experts out there, we'd love to have you with that. We do an investing workshop and I end up leading a lot of them or co-presenting with student ambassadors, but we would love to have you guys help us out too with this.

00:09:15 **Lisa**

Taxes workshop, we have Steven Valdes who runs our VITA Program at the college. He is an amazing resource and he does our tackling taxes workshop for us every spring. We do financial goal setting workshops, so you don't have to be a money expert in different areas.

00:09:29 **Lisa**

Like if you're really good at goal setting, that might be something that you might wanted to do, our financial goal setting workshop. Every spring we partner with financial aid scholarship office and then one of our counselors to talk about your money and transfer. So, we do that workshop just in the spring.

00:09:48 **Lisa**

We do budgeting workshops, and maybe you're a really good budgeter and you're like, "Hey, I'd like to share some of my budgeting skills with other people." Love to have you do budget workshop or maybe you and some of your friends or co-workers are like experts on something and you're like, "Hey, can we just take it over?" I'd love to have you do that, that'd be awesome.

00:10:05 **Lisa**

We also do a retirement workshop every semester and that one is not a CalSTRS workshop, or a CalPERS workshop, this is a retirement basics workshop. So, we talk about things like 401(k)s and IRAs and how to get started and the timing of things and looking at when you should start and all the basics of retirement.

00:10:25 **Lisa**

So, that might be something that someone is interested in, especially as we get closer to retirement, things become more clear for us. So, if you're listening and you're interested in that, give me a holler, alright.

00:10:35 **Sun**

Oh, that's wonderful, thank you, that's such a nice generous open invitation for folks from the community to come share. As you were sharing, you mentioned something about student ambassadors and I was wondering if you could just talk a little bit more about who are the student ambassadors and what do they do?

00:10:51 **Lisa**

Absolutely. We have like the best team, we have a really, really great team of students working with us. It's interesting because I have stopped advertising for student ambassadors because we get inquiries all the time, "Hey, I'd love to work for you guys."

00:11:02 **Lisa**

We have students who are coming to us through the CalWORKs Program where they have work study and they're just looking to get a job with us. They've heard about money, want to learn more for themselves and want to help others. And we also have students who are finance majors that come in and they're like, "Hey, I want to help other students, I want to present workshops and such."

00:11:23 **Lisa**

We have one student right now who is a finance major who is doing his work experience, his internship with us and he leads our investing hour, which we are changing our investing hour. We just found out that a better time for investing hour is not Mondays at one o'clock, but it's Wednesdays at one o'clock.

00:11:39 **Lisa**

So, come see us Wednesdays at one o'clock and if you can't come in person, go to our website, which is Mt. SAC MMMC, click on our virtual front desk and come join us that way.

00:11:50 **Lisa**

So, Wednesdays at one o'clock, so that's another one of our students. We also have students who have just like, "Hey, I heard you guys are a great place to work and I love talking to people about money," that's a big way we get our student ambassadors. So, I think we have a team of like eight students right now.

00:12:05 **Sun**

Wow, that's really fantastic and a great way I think for students to be involved in part of what's happening on campus, and we'll include the link to the Money Management Center in the show notes so folks have easy access to that.

00:12:16 **Sun**

I was wondering if we could talk a little bit about the importance of the offerings of the Money Management Center for the campus community, and thinking back to my childhood, we didn't have a lot of conversations about money when I was growing up, and I imagine that might be a fairly common experience for folks.

00:12:33 **Sun**

So, I was just wondering if you could share a little bit, like what do we know about the need for programs and centers like this, and what do we know about the difference it can make for folks?

00:12:42 **Lisa**

Absolutely, and I was like you as well, soon where growing up, it was something we talked about but it wasn't something that we talked about enough in depth. And so, I was horrible with money when I was in college, I was horrible with money after college. So, I guess part of my mission too is to help others to hopefully not make as many mistakes as I did with their finances, but also to learn as we're getting started and it's a different world today.

00:13:07 **Lisa**

I remember when I got my first apartment after college, my credit score didn't matter, and now, you can't get an apartment if you don't have a decent credit score. So, it's super important that we understand how money works, we understand basics of credit and using credit wisely and budgeting and all that kind of stuff, otherwise it can really impact us in a negative way.

00:13:26 **Lisa**

So, one of the things too with the Title V Grant, is this Title V Grant, it's for Hispanic serving institutions. And so, one of the things that we do and it just kind of happened, it's kind of pulled itself together - our team, our student ambassador team is incredibly diverse in many ways.

00:13:40 **Lisa**

We have a little bit of everything. It's a center which is super awesome because different perspectives and different cultural backgrounds and such. But one of the goals with this, because we're funded through the Title V Grant is serving our Latinx students.

00:13:52 **Lisa**

And so, it's really interesting to see that - just a little bit of data here, and this is from our last annual report and it's from the 21-22 year because our years actually end September 30th. So, this is giving you an idea and this is data from our workshops because that's where it's easiest to collect data because we have a survey at the end of each workshop that students take.

00:14:15 **Lisa**

And so, as far as ethnicity in the fall of 2021, almost 60% of the students that were participating in our workshops were Latinx in winter which is a smaller number of course too, but they're almost 80%.

00:14:28 **Lisa**

And then in spring 2022 it was about 55%, and in summer 2022, it was 60%. So, the percentage of students that were serving at the college based on ethnicity are significantly higher Latinx than this population of students we're serving at the college as a whole.

00:14:47 **Lisa**

So, that's fabulous to see. I know a lot of students, not just Latinx students but a lot of students, they come to us and they're like "Family-wise, culturally-wise, we don't talk about these things, so I need to learn it somewhere so that I can help to elevate myself and the people around me as well.

00:15:03 **Lisa**

So, in fall, 2021 by age group, our largest age group was our under 20 category, and those students were about 40% of the students who were attending our workshop. And then in spring of 2022, it completely changed from that. Our largest was actually 30 to 49. So, that's kind of an interesting shift that happens. So, we just never know who is going to be attending our workshops.

00:15:26 **Lisa**

Is it going to be our younger students, is it going to be our older students? So, that just kind of gives you an example of how the population is changing a little bit for who's coming to see us. And then also with that too, just to know that our workshops are pretty much the same from semester to semester for the fall and spring semesters. They vary in summer and winter and the reason for that is because we only do four workshops.

00:15:46 **Lisa**

So, we just pick what were the best workshops from the previous semester. Like this summer, you can probably be having a investing workshop, we will probably have a credit workshop, we may have a retirement workshop, but we'll probably have a money basics for students workshop. That's one that we're putting together right now. So, kind of like the top 40 things that college students need to know to be successful with their money, that's a little data for you there.

00:16:11 **Sun**

That's great, thank you so much for sharing that. Did you have more?

00:16:15 **Lisa**

I do have more, there's another thing I wanted to add, is that our workshops attendance tends to be heavier female than male. So, just kind of going across fall 2021 was about 65% female, winter was about 75% female, spring 2022 then about 75% female, and in summer, about 60% female.

00:16:35 **Sun**

That's really interesting, thank you for sharing it. It sounds like you're able to use some of the data that you're collecting right away. Like you mentioned earlier that you discovered that Wednesday afternoons were better than Monday afternoons for one of the workshops. It sounds like you're able to survey folks and then make changes right away in some cases.

00:16:51 **Lisa**

Yes, we've been doing that, and sometimes we're a little slow with it, but most of the time, it's like, "Ooh, that's why this isn't working, let's take that and run with it." Another example too is we've been offering a credit hour and we're now week eight, and no one's come for credit hour.

00:17:06 **Lisa**

So, it's just one of those things and I think about it too, like sometimes with the college offers like a stress workshop, it's like okay, "Do I want to admit that I'm stressed and go sit with other people that are admitting that they're stressed or can I do that in Zoom so I can have my little black screen and nobody sees me?"

00:17:21 **Lisa**

So, it's just one of those tricky things, we just have to find a new way then to reach out to students about credit outside of the couple workshops this semester that we do. So, if anybody's listening to that and has great ideas of how we can reach students to talk to them about credit, I'd love that because that is one of the big things.

00:17:40 **Lisa**

I don't know about you Sun, but for me, when I was in college, back when I was 18 and I went to college, I went and bought my books, then I walked outside the bookstore and there was a booth right there and they said, "Hey, would you like to sign up for a credit card? You get a free Iowa State sweatshirt."

00:17:55 **Lisa**

I was like, "Sure, let's do that," and it went on and on like that. And of course, the stuff that I got in the mail and probably people who are listening know where this is going. It's not good, it was ugly. And so, I probably paid way, way, way more in interest over quite a number of years of my life than I should have.

00:18:12 **Lisa**

And so, now, that's illegal, they can't do that. But still students don't know sometimes when they're getting themselves into a credit. So, we would love to be able to reach out to students in whatever ways they're needing. So, if you're a student, if you're a manager, if you're a professor, tell us what your thoughts are on this.

00:18:30 **Lisa**

If you're a professor and you want us to come to your class for 10 minutes and have students ask us questions about credit, we'd love to do that. We can give an overview of who we are, what we do, give you some swag, and then bombard us with questions about credit or any other things about money, and then be on our way, just let us know.

00:18:47 **Sun**

That's great and we'll make sure to include your contact information in the show notes as well in case anyone wants to reach out and invite you to join their class.

00:18:54 **Lisa**

Thank you, I appreciate it.

00:18:56 **Sun**

What you were just sharing just made me wonder, are you noticing any difference in the topics that folks have been interested in exploring over the last couple of years? I know the center opened during the pandemic, I'm just thinking we hear so much about inflation and how much more it costs to go to the grocery store and things like that. So, I was just curious whether you were noticing that in the folks who reach out to you?

00:19:18 **Lisa**

That's a great question. I think for my financial counseling sessions, there's a lot more interest just in looking at the big picture. So, financial goal setting. Although they won't come in for financial goal setting, they'll come in for this, this and this, and then we sit down, it's really financial goal setting.

00:19:32 **Lisa**

It's like the pieces all work together and how do I take where I am right now with the struggle or that idea and move myself forward, a lot on how do I get myself unstuck, and also a lot on investing. That's a very popular topic of all ages.

00:19:46 **Lisa**

People want to know, and of course, all this stuff with crypto and it's all this stuff with that, all the hype stuff they want to talk about. But we want to talk about the basics to help students and employees as well to get a solid foundation and move forward. And then if you have extra money that you want to invest in high risk things, but not putting all your money into high risk investments is super important.

00:20:06 **Sun**

I feel like the center is offering exactly the kind of programs that so often folks say, "I wish that I had learned this in school and here's an opportunity to do that." So, I'm wondering if our listeners are going to take just one thing away from our conversation today, what is it that you'd like them to take away?

00:20:27 **Lisa**

We have had a very high percentage of first generation students that we work with. So, I guess my biggest thing is if you're a first generation student listening to this right now or you have friends who are first generation college students or even if you're not first generation, please come see us. But especially if you're first gen, the percentage is so high of students that we work with, we we know that there is a need there.

00:20:48 **Lisa**

And so, please don't be afraid because I'm a professor and all that, that sounds scary. Come to our table, talk to our students, and get the feel there and ask them some questions, and that's a best starting point. Come to one of our booths that we have and asks our students some questions, engage in conversation with them, and then make that next step to go to a workshop and maybe do a financial counseling session with me.

00:21:09 **Lisa**

We're here to support you and help you to elevate you. While you're here for free to help you to move forward, we want you to get through classes, we want you to get through Mt. SAC onto your next schools in life and we want you to be successful.

00:21:23 **Sun**

Thank you so much, that's such a warm invitation for folks to reach out and make a connection with the Money Management Center. If folks are interested in learning more, if they want to reach out and get in touch with you, what's the best way for them to do that?

00:21:36 **Lisa**

Thank you very much, Sun too, I appreciate that. Best way to reach me is my email address. Actually I have my phone ring today, it freaked me out. No one calls me because I'm not in my faculty office very often. So, my email address is lamos1, so it's like Ramos with an L instead of an R. So, lamos1@mtsac.edu.

00:21:58 **Sun**

Great, thank you and we'll include that in the show notes for folks as well so they have easy access.

00:22:04 **Lisa**

Thank you, appreciate it.

00:22:05 **Sun**

Well, Lisa, I want to thank you so much for the fantastic work that you're doing for the Mt. SAC community and for everyone on campus. And it sounds like the center's really growing and thriving and responding in really important ways to the community's needs, so thank you and everyone on your team for your really fantastic work.

00:22:23 **Lisa**

Thank you very much, and I have to give a huge shout out to Lisa Rodriguez. Dr. Lisa Rodriguez is my manager with the Title V Grant and she has been incredibly supportive of our work and really helps us to thrive and shine, so couldn't do it without her.

00:22:36 **Sun**

Wonderful, shout out to Lisa as well. Thank you so much for joining us today on the podcast and we'd love to have you back again to chat in the future.

00:22:45 **Lisa**

Thank you.

00:22:49 **Christina**

Thank you for listening to the Magic Mountie Podcast, and don't forget to share your favorite episodes.