



February 13, 2012

Dear Western Students:

On January 4, 2012 we communicated with you that we would be moving quickly on the Higher One Task Force recommendations regarding the marketing and fees associated with the Higher One Card. We have met several times with Higher One representatives to discuss the recommendations. We wanted to share the results of those conversations and the direction we are taking with you. They are listed below.

### 1. Communication/Marketing

We will simplify the way that students make their choice about refunding options. Rather than going through a Higher One portal to make their refund choice or change their banking information, students will be able to use their Western online account, just as they do for all of their other financial needs. This is a pilot program and is under development. The project charter is attached if you would like to review it. The elements of this pilot program once it is completed will include:

- a. Students will access their refunding “choice” through their Western student account online instead of a Higher One website;
- b. For students that choose the direct deposit option, authentication of bank account and identification will be completely automated (no paper to print and fax);
- c. Bank account options will be clear and fairly presented – students will be able to sign up for the bank account of their choice (the Higher One OneAccount will still be available as an option);
- d. Future debit cards issued by Higher One will **NOT** be branded as a university card (no Western logo, colors, etc.);
- e. The Higher One “debit card” will be mailed **only** to those students who have actively chosen a Higher One bank account; and,
- f. Higher One will communicate with students that have **not** chosen a Higher One account **only** with Western’s approval of all communication and marketing materials.

Our goal is to have this project completed by June 30, 2012.

## 2. Higher One Account Fees

We had requested that Higher One make changes to the fee structure so that students could more easily access their funds without incurring fees. We were successful in making the following changes for students who choose the Higher One Card as their refunding option:

- a. The pin based transaction fee of \$.50 will be waived for to the first four pin transactions on the student's Higher One Card account. Students will receive a warning message following each of the initial four transactions to help students avoid charges after the four waived fees have been used up;
- b. Higher One will install an outside ATM (VU vicinity), which will be available 24/7 for students to use without incurring any foreign ATM fees. Higher One is also pursuing a contract with a network that would accept the Higher One card without a foreign ATM fee;
- c. Higher One has agreed to reduce the inactivity fee from \$19 to \$10; and,
- d. Higher One will waive the \$.40 per transaction fee that Western pays for the refunding program. The resulting annual savings (approximately \$12,500) will be permanently allocated to support a student debt counseling and financial literacy program that would be operated by Western.

The fee changes above, with the exception of the waived \$.40 transaction fee, will be implemented as a part of the pilot project. Therefore, the changes will not be in effect until at least June 30, 2012.

Thank you for your input and for your continued patience throughout this process. Much progress has been made in addressing the issues you raised. We will continue to [post updates](#) on our progress with regards to the pilot project discussed above.

Sincerely,



Richard Van Den Hul  
Vice President



Anna Ellermeier  
Associated Students President