

The College of Wooster
Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund Reporting – Emergency Financial Aid Grants to
Students Report #3 (8/24/20)

On March 27, 2020, the President of the United States signed the CARES Act (H.R. 748), which provides emergency relief funds to organizations and individuals affected by the coronavirus pandemic. The Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF), found in Section 18004 of the CARES Act, provides funding to institutions of higher education “to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.” This report provides details on the first award The College of Wooster received under the HEERF, the funds for Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students under Award No. P425E203012.

Certification and Agreement

The College of Wooster signed and returned the Certification and Agreement to the U.S. Department of Education on April 21, 2020 and received the grant award notification on April 28, 2020. In accordance with the terms of the certification, the College will use no less than 50 percent of the funds received under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act to provide Emergency Financial Aid Grants directly to students.

Award

The College of Wooster has received a total of \$1,417,795 under Section 18004(a)(1) of the HEERF from the Department of Education. Pursuant to the College’s Certification and Agreement for Emergency Financial Aid Grants to Students, at least \$708,898 will be distributed directly to students impacted by campus disruptions due to the novel coronavirus.

Funds Distributed

As of the close of business on August 24, 2020, The College of Wooster has distributed \$660,971 to students in Emergency Financial Aid Grants under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act.

Student Eligibility

The estimated total number of students at The College of Wooster eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and thus eligible to receive Emergency Financial Aid Grants to students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act is 1569. As of July 10, 2020, 541 students have received an Emergency Financial Aid Grant to students under Section 18004(a)(1) of the CARES Act.

Methods Used to Determine Which Students Receive Aid and How Much

The College of Wooster created a brief online secure survey asking students to confirm that they experienced additional expenses, such as food, housing, course materials, technology, health care, and child-care expenses, related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus in the amount of approximately \$2,500. The Director of Financial Aid, in collaboration with the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs/Senior Dean of Students, then evaluated each application individually and awarded emergency financial aid grants to those students who identified such expenses in amounts between \$500 and \$2,500, depending on need.

In addition to responding to requests through the online survey, The College of Wooster identified the neediest population of students, which included all Pell Grant recipients as well as those individuals with Expected Family Contributions (EFC), as determined by the FAFSA, of below a certain level. These students who were deemed to be part of the neediest population and had not identified themselves through the online survey and therefore were not initially awarded grants through self-reporting, were subsequently sent emergency financial aid grants. Individuals who were identified as dependent students were sent an award in the amount of \$1,000, and those who were identified as independent students were sent an award in the amount of \$2,500. The College of Wooster based these calculations on the eight-week disruption to campus operations caused by the novel coronavirus during the Spring 2020 semester. The College determined that, for each week of the disruption, dependent students would receive \$125 to cover their food, housing, and other personal expenses that families had not previously been provided. Additionally, the College determined that, for each week of the disruption, independent students, who were responsible for providing for themselves without additional assistance, would receive approximately \$300 for the above expenses.

Instructions or Directions Given to Students

In anticipation of being positioned to distribute the student aid portion of the CARES Act HEERF as quickly as possible, especially to students who were in crisis due to the coronavirus, President Sarah Bolton sent an email to all students on April 28, 2020 informing them of general financial and counseling sources of support available, as well as providing an update about campus planning for the fall. In the email, she asked students to reach out to the Dean of Students' Office or the Office of Financial should they require immediate support in these challenging times.

The Associate Vice President for Student Affairs/Senior Associate Dean of Students and the Director of Financial Aid reviewed the emails sent by students who reached out in response to

President Bolton's email. Those students who identified that they had current expenses due to the disruption of campus operations received a follow-up email from the Director of Financial Aid asking them to fill out the online survey referenced above.

Students who responded to the survey and identified expenses in the amount of \$2,500 or more, then received an email notice from the Director of Financial Aid and the Associate Vice President for Students/Senior Dean of Students informing them of their award. This email communication informed the student of the pending award; the amount being provided under the CARES Act; the federal government as the source of the funding; the purpose and use of the funds; and the method for the distribution of the funds.

Copies of the instructional/informational materials given to the students include the following (which were included in the first report prepared on 5/28/20) in the order listed:

1. Email from President Sarah Bolton dated April 28, 2020 informing students of resources and support available, as well as campus planning updates;
2. Email from the Director of Financial Aid asking students to fill out the online survey;
3. Online survey accessed from the online student portal;
4. Email from the Associate Vice President of Student Affairs/ Senior Dean of Students and Director of Financial Aid informing the student of the award and of funding from the CARES Act;
5. The College of Wooster CARES Act Informational Page.

Additionally, any student who received CARES Act funding in the first round and who submitted an additional request to the Financial Aid Office or the Dean of Students' Office for more funding was asked to complete a survey certifying that they experienced expenses due to the disruption of campus operations in excess of the funds they had already received.