CARES Act. Relief Funds

Wesley College continues to identify ways to provide support to students in our community who experienced hardships during the COVID-19 Pandemic. This effort was encouraged when the United States Congress passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Wesley College was allocated $1,494,070 of which not less than half had to be distributed to students who requested and who qualified for Emergency Financial Assistance.

Wesley College students were made aware of funds via two campus-wide emails as well as mentoring from faculty and staff. Outreach to students who might be in need of support and assistance was also accomplished by posting on the Colleges website under COVID-19 Updates.

Eligibility:

Wesley College chose to take a personal and supportive approach to screening students who were in need of financial support. Students were asked to email the Dean of Students identifying their challenges and how much money they were requesting. The Dean of Students replied to each students’ inquiry in a personal and emotionally supportive manner. Students’ names and identifying information was shared with the Financial Aid Funding Committee which was comprised of the College’s CFO, the Director of Financial Aid, and the Dean of Students.

Expenses eligible for Emergency Financial Assistance include, but were not limited to medical expenses, food, housing payments, utilities, technology, relocation costs, unexpected child care, course materials, as well as other unexpected expense to students due to the pandemic.

Following the guidance from the Dept. of Education (DOE) at the time of issuance, funds were distributed to only those students who were:

1. Title IV Eligible as determined by filing a 2019-2020 FAFSA
2. Enrolled during the Spring 2020 semester in an eligible program
3. Making Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

Allocation of Funds:
Based on student responses, as well as input from faculty, staff, and athletic coaches, the Funding Committee analyzed this data to remove those students eligible for funds from the “Emergency” half of the total funds pool because they had submitted a FAFSA and were U.S. citizens. The maximum individual award was $5,944, which is $251 less than the DOE recommended cap based on the maximum Pell award.

Coronavirus Aid relief checks were sent to students with a self-certification letter which included the following statement: “By accepting these funds, you are acknowledging that the expenses you submitted in your aid request are related to the disruption of campus operations due to the coronavirus. Allowable expenses include, but are not limited to, food housing, course materials, technology, health care, and child-care.”

To date, a total of $1,363,684 has been distributed directly to 556 students. Of that total, $795,768 was sent to 292 students receiving emergency grants, including, for those who lived in university housing and/or participated in a meal plan, a pro-rated refund for room and board charges this spring. An additional $567,916 was sent to 264 additional students as their pro-rated refund for room and board charges. The remaining $130,386 will be distributed this fall to students who meet the eligibility criteria and demonstrate additional hardship and/or exceptional circumstances for the Fall 2020 semester.