

## **SUNY Old Westbury CARES Act Plan Amendment**

We are seeking approval to amend our original CARES Act Plan submitted to SUNY on May 7, 2020 based on a review of the applications received to date and the need to provide immediate housing to a cohort of indigent students.

Our original distribution projections were based on expected response rates higher than what was actually experienced. Extra efforts were made during the application period to generate additional application submissions. These efforts included:

- Multiple direct student emails
- Multiple announcements in the SUNY Old Westbury Current (weekly newsletter)
- Multiple social media announcements
- Text messaging
- Web site announcements
- Outreach to the Student Government Association
- Outreach through the student collaboration system (Navient)

### **Summary of Plan Results**

As of September 9, 2020, we have distributed \$961,850 (35%) of the \$2,761,337 allocated to the campus for HEERF Emergency Grants, leaving \$1,799,487 to be distributed. The application process remains open for anyone who did not apply or needs to resolve an issue such as filing a FAFSA. We expect additional interest to be generated as students turn their attention to the fall semester. We also plan an additional round of announcements. The second round of awards may have a lower average amount depending on the number of applications received. We anticipate distributing all funds by the middle of the fall 2020 semester.

Group	Awards	Average Award	Total Awards
High Needs	863	\$950	\$819,850
Non-high Needs	284	\$500	\$142,000
Ultra High Needs *			
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,147</b>	<b>\$839</b>	<b>\$961,850</b>

Note: \* Proposed new group – max of 10 students

### **Proposal 1 - Increase in Award Limits**

Our original plan provided awards ranging from \$500 to \$950 with higher awards to students deemed high-need with limited available resources. Priority was given to students based on Pell Eligible Expected Family Contribution (EFC). An assessment of the applications received led to a need to revise the award amounts with priority still being given to those students with EFC's below the Pell threshold. Due to the lower than expected response rate, we were able to set a new base

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award amount for the Pell eligible cohort of \$1,180 from \$950. The award of \$1,180 also aligns with the amount of stimulus funds that most adults received.

After establishing the base award amount, awards for the non-high-needs cohort were then increased to \$779 from \$500 based upon the amount requested on their applications.

As applications were reviewed it became apparent that students had vastly different interpretations of allowable expenses and were not always able to differentiate between losses and expenses. Requests ranged from \$0 to \$31,500. Many requests referenced the student's desire to pay their parents' mortgages and living expenses because their parents experienced a loss of wages. Many students reported dependent care expenses even though they had no dependents. Many students requested funds for future tuition expenses. Other students seemed to greatly underestimate their expenses. Each application was assessed to reach a reasonable award amount within the range established for each cohort and we are confident that the resulting grants represent an equitable distribution of funds to reimburse students for unexpected additional expenses related to campus disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic with a priority on supporting students with the lowest EFC's.

### **Proposal 2 – Fund Housing Insecure Population**

Due to the COVID-19 disruption of campus operations and with the existence of the Alternate Care Facility on campus, Old Westbury is not providing on-campus housing for the fall 2020 semester. As a result, a group of students were identified as "housing insecure." These indigent students would have been housed in our residence halls had they been opened and received free or significantly reduced housing charges (they would have been responsible for room/key deposit, laundry and other sundry charges). The closure of the residence halls created a serious and immediate need for these students. Each student was determined to be Title IV/Pell eligible and packaged for 20/21 financial aid as an off-campus housing student. The CARES Act Funds will be awarded to this population based upon their eligibility as Title IV/Pell recipients up to the Pell maximum.

The proposed changes will provide greater benefits to our students and enable them to better address their needs resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please advise at your earliest convenience if this amendment is acceptable so that we can expeditiously implement these changes and provide needed funds to our students.

Respectfully submitted to SUNY System Administration on September 9, 2020 by:

Len L. Davis



Senior Vice President & Chief Financial Officer