May 18, 2020

Dear ECU Community,

In addition to so many personal, academic and operational challenges presented by COVID-19 to the Pirate community, significant financial implications have occurred and will continue for our university and so many others across the higher education landscape.

We want to keep these issues from derailing the academic progress that many in our community have worked toward for a lifetime. Our priority in the short term is to provide our students and their families with the relief we can, using funds that have been made available through federal and state grants, our generous donors and other sources.

The U.S. Department of Education has now begun releasing the first wave of Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding. In coordination with the UNC System, ECU is in the processing of implementing the best mechanisms to deliver these funds to students. ECU has received approximately $19.4 million, of which $9.7 million is specifically reserved to provide students with emergency financial aid grants.

We have established a clear set of guiding principles to help us distribute this money effectively, equitably and quickly. Our hope is to help students stay enrolled at ECU, mitigate financial impacts from COVID-19, and maintain progress toward earning a college degree—a lifelong goal for so many students and families in our community.

- We will continue to distribute the funds to those with the most significant need and as widely as possible, in keeping with legislative guidelines. ECU has used a range of financial aid/FAFSA data to identify those who are Pell Grant eligible and also meet the criteria of the CARES Act regulations. All students who meet both sets of criteria will receive a flat amount of grant funding that will be processed through our Financial Aid and Cashiers Offices before the end of May.

- We have also created a clear and simple application process so that students and families can seek support easily. We acknowledge that students and families affected by COVID-19 may not currently meet the criteria to receive the awards listed above, and we will continue to review these applications on a case-by-case basis, using other grants, emergency funding, and federal/state monies to meet these needs. The linked form, which was shared to students on April 17, is provided again at the end of this document. We encourage all students who have financial need to complete this form, especially if they are not eligible for CARES Act or Pell Grant funding. If you have already filled out this form previously, please do not fill it out again. At this time, we are not reviewing second appeals of those who have already received awards.

- Recipients will see the amount of their grant posted to their student account before it is disbursed. Students are encouraged to verify their banking information and update their mailing addresses. More detailed instructions on how to do this are available here.

www.ecu.edu
To be eligible for CARES grants, students must have been enrolled on campus in Spring 2020, be eligible to receive federal financial aid, and have filed a FAFSA with ECU. More details on the CARES process, eligibility, and specific criteria are available at this FAQs webpage. Students (undergraduate and graduate) with questions should email covid19grants@ecu.edu.

While we have already distributed more than $9.2 million in refunds to students for Spring semester housing and dining costs, we are not finished seeking financial relief and support for our students. We also continue to distribute funds from Student Emergency Fund and Student Treasure Chest account. These funds are supported through the generosity of ECU donors and is administered through the ECU Division of Student Affairs and our University Advancement Office. Contributions to this fund are accepted here. We continue to see more needs among our students, so all help is appreciated.

The remaining 50% of our CARES funding, as outlined in the legislation, will be used to partially offset the more than $22 million in expenses associated with the university’s response to COVID-19 and related, on-going operational impacts.

ECU will continue to actively seek financial support for our students through all means available to us – accessing UNC System resources, securing support from state and federal sources, and activating our generous donor and alumni population to support the needs of our students and families. We will keep you posted as we have more opportunities to share or information to pass along. Please continue to monitor your email, follow @EastCarolina social media channels, and regularly check our Coronavirus web site for the latest updates.

Thank you.

RonM

Ron Mitchelson
Interim Chancellor

This is the form referred to above for students seeking financial support:
https://eastcarolinauniversity.formstack.com/forms/covid19_emergency_relief_fund