

CACC provides funds to students through CARES Act

STAFF REPORT
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On March 13, President Donald Trump declared a national emergency concerning the COVID-19 outbreak and signed into law the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act on March 27.

The CARES Act allocated nearly \$14 billion to support colleges and universities around the country. The most significant portion of that funding allocation provided that \$12.56 billion will be distributed to institutions using a formula based on student enrollment. Of the amount allocated to each institution under this formula, at least 50% was to be reserved to provide students with emergency financial aid grants to help cover expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus.

According to a press release, Central Alabama Community College (CACC) received a total allocation under the Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds (HEERF) in the amount of \$1,222,052, of which 50% or \$611,026 is to be distributed to eligible students for specific expenses related to the cost of attendance that were a direct result of the disruption of campus opera-



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Central Alabama Community College is providing funds to students through the CARES Act. Eligible students include students who were enrolled in a degree or certificate program this spring, who were taking at least one traditional course that was transitioned online as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and who are FAFSA-eligible as defined by the U.S. Department of Education.

tions due to the national COVID-19 pandemic.

“CACC is pleased to be able to offer assistance through these funds to our students during this challenging pandemic,” CACC acting president Jeff Lynn said in a release.

“Our students are at the heart of everything that we do, and we want to do what we can to support them and their success.”

In accordance with federal and state guidance, CACC is providing benefits to all eligible students with actual amounts based on enrollment intensity, whether full time or part time, similar to allocation distributions used by the department of education in awarding Pell Grant funds.

Eligible students, according to federal regulations, include those students who were enrolled in a degree or certificate program in Spring 2020, who were taking at least one traditional course that was transitioned online as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and who are FAFSA-eligible as defined by the U.S. Department of Education. Dual enrollment, transient students and students taking classes for audit do not qualify for funds.

In an effort to assist as many students as possible with expenses incurred related to the disruption of campus operations due to coronavirus, CACC established four funding tiers ranging from \$250 to \$850 based on an enrollment/participation status as of March 13.

Students who meet basic eligibility criteria for federal financial aid according to the 2019-20 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) automatically receive consideration. Students must complete the 2019-20 FAFSA no later than June 30 to receive consideration.

As of last week, CACC had assisted 748 students with funds totaling \$507,800. Awards will continue through July to assist all eligible students who were enrolled during the Spring 2020 term.

Additional information, including FAQs are available on the college website at www.cacc.edu/higher-education-emergency-relief-grant. Students with questions may reach out to heerf@cacc.edu.