

Siena Heights University CARES Act Student Aid Report #1 (5/15/2020)

PR/Award No. P425E201321

Introduction

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 of the first award Siena Heights University (SHU) received under the HEERF.

Acknowledgment of Funding and Certification

SHU reviewed, signed, and returned the U.S. Department of Education’s Certification and Agreement for these funds on April 13, 2020, and received our grant award notification (GAN) on April 25, 2020. In keeping with the terms of the certification, SHU 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.

Total Award

SHU received a total of \$1,545,879 under Section 18014(a)(1) of the HEERF, of which at least \$772,940 will be provided directly to students impacted by campus disruptions due to the novel coronavirus.

Funds Distributed to Date

On May 11, 2020, SHU awarded approximately 80% (\$615,607) of the total CARES Act support to all known qualified Title IV students by granting eligible full-time students with \$560 and part-time students with \$250. On May 20, 2020, an additional \$42,986.67 was released to eligible full- and part-time students for extenuating circumstances. These funds were in addition to the first Cares Act relief payment made to qualified students. As of May 19, 2020, SHU has awarded eligible students \$658,593.67 in CARES Act support funding.

Student Eligibility

SHU determined a total number of 1,163 students were eligible to participate in programs under Section 484 in Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, and therefore qualified to receive CARES Act emergency financial aid grants. Eligible students received their grant support as of May 11, 2020. Additionally, SHU chose to hold back 20 percent or \$157,333 of the CARES Act funds for students with justified circumstances. As of May 20, 2020, 114 eligible students have received additional CARES Act support through an application process for extenuating circumstances.

Method Used to Determine Which Students Receive Aid and How Much

SHU is committed to assisting all eligible students that may have been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic to the greatest extent possible with the CARES Act funds to provide funds to cover financial needs that include food, housing, technology, course materials, health/child care, and other costs. The University awarded approximately 80% (\$615,607) of the total CARES Act support to all known Title IV eligible students by awarding and refunding all full-time students with \$560 and all part-time students with \$250 Grants on May 11, 2020. Full- and part-time student status was based on enrollment before March 13, 2020. SHU considered degree-seeking undergraduate students enrolled in twelve (12) or more semester hours to be full-time for undergraduate and nine (9) semester hours for graduate studies. Students with credit hours of less than 12 for undergraduate and 9 for graduate are considered part-time. All refunds were processed through SHU's independent third-party vendor, BankMobile.

In addition to the standard relief payments made available to eligible students, 20 percent or \$157,333 of CARES Act support funding is being used for extenuating circumstances experienced by students in addition to the original relief payment. Students are required to apply online through an easy web-based drop-down menu application. Students determined eligible for the standard payment and students eligible for Title IV, but did not file a FAFSA, may also apply for the carved out additional support. The use of the additional support is determined by a campus community committee led by SHU's Dean for Students, along with a faculty member and the Director of Student Accounts.

SHU students not eligible for CARES Act funding are encouraged to apply for support through the Saint's Strong Fund with an online application. This fund was established specifically to assist students with emergency needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. The funding source is donations received from trustees, alumni, faculty, staff, and other friends of the University.

International, dual-enrolled, guest, non-degree seeking, non-U.S. citizen students, and domestic students who are not eligible for CARES Act funding due to issues like student loan default, felony conviction, or enrolled exclusively in online courses prior to March 13, 2020 were not eligible for CARES Act funding.

Instructions or Directions Given to the Students

In accordance with the Secretary of Education's instructions for institutions to issue aid to students as soon as possible under the student aid portion of the CARES Act, HEERF, President Sister Peg Albert sent all winter semester enrolled students, faculty, and staff advance notice of the program on Thursday, April 30, 2020.

The Office of Marketing and Communication developed a Coronavirus Information page directly on SHU's web site located at www.sienaheights.edu. Within that is a dedicated webpage is the CARES Act funding Grants FAQs, which links to the application for the Extenuating Circumstances and Saint's Strong grants (www.sienaheights.edu/shucaresfaq). Additionally, SHU offers a Daily Announcement email service that goes to all students, faculty, and staff. Within the publication is an alert notification entitled Latest SHU Coronavirus Updates with links to access the University's Coronavirus response and FAQs web pages.