

Siena Heights University CARES Act Student Aid Report #7 (06/31/2021) FINAL

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% or \$615,320 of the total CARES Act support to all known qualified Title IV students by granting eligible full- and part-time students the amounts of \$560 and \$250, respectively. Since May 11, 2020, an additional \$101,367.35 was released to eligible full- and part-time students for extenuating circumstances. Additional release of fund total \$42,986.67 for period 2 (May 12 – May, 20, 2020), \$10,350.00 for Period 3 (May 21 – August 21, 2020), \$150.00 for period 4 (August 22 – September 30, 2020), \$12,770.68 for period 5 (October 1 – December 31, 2020), \$34,260.00 for period 6 (January 1 – March 31, 2021), and \$850 for period 7 (April 1 – June 30, 2021). The remaining funds of \$56,252.65 for extenuating circumstances was released when HEERF II CRRSA Act funds were disbursed. These funds are in addition to the first Cares Act relief payment made to qualified students. As of June 30, 2021, SHU has awarded 1,392 eligible students a total of \$716,687.35 in CARES Act funding support with the additional \$56,252.65 released for HEERF II CRRSA Act funding for a grand total of \$772,940 in student grant funding.

Student Eligibility

SHU determined a total number of 1,392 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. Initially 1,163 eligible students received their grant support as of May 11, 2020. Additionally, SHU chose to hold back 20 percent or \$157,620 of the CARES Act funds for students with justified circumstances. As of June 30, 2021, 36 new eligible student and 193 prior eligible full- and part-time 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 full- and part-time students that have been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic to the greatest extent possible with the CARES Act funds to cover financial needs that include food, housing, technology, course materials, health/child care, and other related costs. The University awarded approximately 80 percent or \$615,320 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. The status of full- and part-time students 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 \$157,620 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 apply for the carved out additional support. The use of the additional support is determined by a campus community committee led by the University's Dean for Students, along with a faculty member and the Director of Student Accounts.

University students not eligible for CARES Act funding are encouraged to apply for support through the Saint's Strong Fund with an online application. The 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.