

April 24, 2020

Dear Grand Canyon University students:

The United States Department of Education issued guidance this week regarding the distribution of CARES Act emergency financial aid funds as spelled out in these FAQs:

- [FAQ 1](#) (Grants to Students)
- [FAQ 2](#) (Institutional Portion)

GCU has not yet received any funds, but as soon as possible after they are received, GCU will distribute the Grants to Students portion which represents 50% of the University's \$22.3 million allotment to those students who are eligible per the stipulations outlined in the above document. Universities are permitted to use the remaining 50% Institutional Portion (in our case \$11.175 million), to cover their own expenses related to the COVID-19 pandemic. GCU expects to incur in excess of \$11.175 million in COVID-related losses, but as we stated previously, we are committed to distributing 100% of these funds to our students in order to help them navigate the challenges caused by the coronavirus.

Before we distribute the Institutional Portion, we are sending a letter to Arizona's Congressional members and copying the U.S. Department of Education asking them to reconsider guidance that prohibits universities from distributing any of those funds to students who are studying online. GCU's intent was to give 50% of the funds, per federal guidelines, to students on our Phoenix campus (as of March 1, 2020) whose instruction was disrupted due to the coronavirus. Because GCU values all of its students equally, we had hoped to take the remaining 50% that was available to the University and instead allocate those funds to online students who have also been impacted by the coronavirus. The individual grants for online students would have been less, simply because that 50% would have been divided by a larger pool of students, but it was a way for us to make the overall CARES Act distribution a little more equitable. However, the guidance provided this week takes that discretion out of our hands by prohibiting GCU from making grants to students who are learning in the University's online campus.

Our students who are studying remotely are making significant sacrifices to upgrade their education and have also been impacted by this pandemic. Students in our Masters of Divinity and Doctoral programs have not been able to come to the Phoenix campus to participate in residencies that are a key component of their education. Nursing students have had clinical placements canceled due to COVID concerns in health-care settings. Education students have not been able to do their student teaching because schools across the country have closed. Counseling students have also had clinical placements canceled. And many online students have had to overcome challenges in their education either because they are health-care professionals working additional hours to meet the demands of the COVID crisis, they are caring for an ill family member stricken with this disease, or because they have lost their jobs or had wages and hours reduced as the economy has shut down.

It doesn't seem equitable, in our eyes, to exclude one group of students – who are also tax-paying members of society – simply because they are studying online. Many of these students will become the nurses, teachers and counselors who are equipped to help our country get through future emergencies and participate in our emerging economic recovery.

GCU has two groups of students who are pursuing their education at different times in their lives and in different ways. However, they all have been impacted by these challenging times. We're asking Congress and the U.S. Department of Education to consider that all students and families, regardless of their learning modality, are enduring hardships and are worthy of receiving CARES Act funds. Our hope is that, in addition to

providing 50% of funds intended for on-campus students, GCU will be allowed to reallocate the remaining funds intended for the University and instead provide them to all students in a more equitable fashion. Unless the policy is changed, we will be unable to do that.

We will continue to provide additional information as further guidance from the Department of Education becomes available.