



April 20, 2020

To: Marta Meana, Ph.D., Interim President  
CC: Chris Heavey, Ph.D., Interim Provost  
Via: Juanita P. Fain, Ph.D., Vice President for Student Affairs  
From: Stephen J. McKellips, Ph.D., Associate Vice President for  
Enrollment & Student Services  
Re: Executive Summary UNLV CARES Act Funding Disbursement Strategy

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UNLV has received \$11,842,647 from the federal CARES Act designated to assist students impacted by the COVID-19 virus and resulting global pandemic mitigation measures. A subcommittee was created to bring key campus representative voices and administrative experts together and outline a plan to distribute CARES Act funds to impacted students in a thoughtful, equitable and efficient manner.

The federal government responded quickly to make these funds available to institutions with very broad guidelines. In a matter of days, the subcommittee examined numerous strategies for rapid disbursement to benefit the greatest number of students, as well as, to have resources available to be responsive to individual cases of high need. The subcommittee examined existing university policy and procedures for disbursements of this kind and researched best practices for federal fiscal compliance.

The subcommittee recommends a strategy that is far reaching, is easily accessible for all UNLV students, ensures due diligence to affirm eligible students receive associated funds, and provides alternative measures for cases falling outside pre-existing laws governing federal funding.

UNLV is providing these funds consistent with Title IV fund eligibility per recommendations from the Department of Education. Additionally, guidance identified that those students who were engaged in only online courses during the spring 2020 semester were not eligible. A review of the number of students who submitted FAFSAs for the Fall 2019, Spring 2020, and Summer 2020 academic year currently totals 19,866. Once the online students were removed, UNLV shows there are currently 18,833 eligible students to receive COVID-19 related funds from the CARES Act.

**The subcommittee recommends students should be required to provide confirmation that they have been impacted financially during the Spring 2020 semester by the COVID-19-related interruptions to regular campus activity. Before any money is disbursed to a student, an affirmation will be recorded in MyUNLV. Only an affirmative response to the impact of COVID-19 will receive funding.**

### **Recommended Disbursement Strategy**

The UNLV CARES Act subcommittee examined institutional data and distribution structures. The resulting recommendation is a 70/20/10 (by percentages) disbursement strategy to connect and deliver funding to students, via three processing avenues. Each avenue (“Group”) will provide institutional guidance for how to identify students and provide for responsive and equitable award methodology

Group 1 (70%) describes a general distribution strategy where the majority of the resources are distributed to students in general, according to an internal need calculation developed solely for this process to get stimulus money into the hands of students in the widest, fastest manner. Group 2 (20%) outlines a formalized “Request Form” methodology where students can seek support based on their unique circumstances. Group 3 (10%) allocates the remaining portion through specific institutional awareness of students who have been directly impacted by the university’s procedures related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Designated populations are identified and defined for each group with a corresponding assessment and disbursement procedure described in greater detail below. Each strategy is based on assumptions such as: different personal and family needs, fiscal components, and other student-specific circumstances. Deadlines reflective of each strategy and population will be established and communicated.

#### **I. Group 1: Auto-disperse to verified students**

70% of the funding (\$8,289,853) will support need-based students identified from FASFA records. All students submitting a FAFSA are eligible for funding in this group, including both graduate and undergraduate students. The funding for Group 1 will be distributed in \$1000 and \$500 allotments to students. Two primary data points (the EFC and unmet need) were combined to determine which group of students demonstrated the greatest need and received the largest awards presented. The next group received the second

highest award. Not all the FAFSA submitting students were able to receive this Group 1 funds, but those who did not receive these funds are eligible for Group 2 or Group 3 funds.

A. **Cohort:**

- a. FAFSA submitting students, including undergraduate, graduate, and professional school students at UNLV during the Spring 2020 semester.
- b. Eligible students must not have received funds through Group 2 or Group 3 processing.

B. **Estimated number of students:** ~12,400

C. **Assumptions:**

- a. "Greatest need" represents a calculated formula using two primary variables at UNLV. The first variable is the EFC (Expected Family Contribution) and is provided on the FAFSA data loaded into the student information system. Greatest Need is further calibrated against how much students have to pay after their financial aid is packaged. The scope of the remaining "Unmet Need" (after packaging) allows for students with the same EFC to have different relative costs to attend UNLV. Different costs reflect different levels of Greatest Need.
- b. Eligibility: Students must have completed a FAFSA or can demonstrate their eligibility to receive Title IV funding to receive funds.
  - i. Eligible students must not have received CARES Act funds in Group 2 or Group 3 processing windows.
- c. Confirmation: Students will be required to authenticate their own admission that their lives were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic before any money will disburse to them.

D. **Awarding Format:** 2-Tier criteria featuring EFC and Unmet Need

E. **Awarding Rubric:**

- a. EFC from lowest to highest: Calculated by the federal government and supplied when the FAFSA information is loaded into the university student information system.
- b. Unmet Need from highest to lowest: Calculated on campus and considers remaining costs after the removal of any aid that was offered. This calculation removes all Plus loans (Parent Loans for University Students) to avoid bias based on parental involvement. For the vast majority of students,

but not all, unmet cost of attendance and the corresponding unmet need are identical.

- c. The funding is awarded in the aggregated order of these two variables until all the available funding is exhausted for Group 1.

- F. **Deadline(s)**: The recommended disbursement deadline for Group 1 is to have the Greatest Need population identified by April 30 and funds disbursed by May 5, 2020.

## II. **Group 2: Request Form available to all students**

20% of the funding (\$2,368,529) will support any student who did not receive funding from Group 1. The funding for group will be distributed in \$1000 and \$500 allotments to students. This group will support students whose circumstances have created serious financial need to support continuity of their person, family, safety and education. Students facing such challenges will complete a brief Request Form to identify their critical needs, and funds will be awarded on a tiered basis in alignment with consideration of individual needs and resources. Students must have completed a FAFSA or can demonstrate their eligibility to receive Title IV funding to receive funds.

### A. **Cohort**:

- a. FAFSA submitting students, including undergraduate, graduate, and professional school students at UNLV during the Spring 2020 semester.
- b. Eligible students must not have received funds through Group 1 or Group 3 processing.
- c. Eligible students must submit the Request Form to be eligible for Group 2 resource consideration.

### B. **Estimated number of students**: Up to ~3,500

### C. **Assumptions**:

- a. Students must complete the online Request Form to be considered. The Request Form will be made available shortly after the Group 1 awards are made to students.
- b. Students who receive Group 1 or Group 3 funding are not eligible for consideration in Group 2.
- c. Eligibility: Students must have completed a FAFSA or can demonstrate their eligibility to receive Title IV funding to receive funds.
- d. Confirmation: Students will be required to authenticate their own admission that their lives were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic before any money will disburse to them.

### D. **Awarding Format**: A comprehensive review is provided whenever a Request Form submitted. These reviews include an assessment of previous COVID-related

allotments and a consideration using the priorities rubric laid out for the committee. The committee reserves the flexibility to extend resources to students beyond the planned thresholds for circumstances it deems extraordinary and are documented within the request form.

- a. A small committee of 3-5 persons, with at least one member represents the Provost's Office, the Vice President of Student Affairs, the Graduate College/Council, CSUN, and the Faculty Senate.
  - i. The same committee reviews cases for both Group 2 and Group 3 requests.

E. **Awarding Rubric:** Eligibility based on Greatest Need

1. Potential Scoring Basis (thresholds subject to further decisions)
  - Scores higher than 30 receive \$1000
  - Scores higher than 23 receive \$500
  - 0 - 22 are held for possible reconsideration for \$500 awards as funds are available
2. Information provided on the Request Form used to evaluate current student eligibility and need, including but not limited to:

a. **COVID-19 Related:**

Is financial need the result of COVID-19 circumstances or challenges? (Y/N)

b. **Areas of potential impact to the student:**

Check and rate on a scale (i.e. 1-5) all appropriate boxes:

- Partial or total Loss of Employment
- Housing Insecurity
- Food Insecurity
- Additional Healthcare Costs / Medical Bills
- Additional Family care (children, elders, etc.) costs
- Unable to pay for educational supplies & technology to support remote instruction (e.g. textbooks, software, internet access, WIFI, computer, webcam, microphone, lab materials, etc.)
- Other concerns and ways impacted by COVID-19 pandemic

c. **Emergency Funding:** Student provided information.

- How much emergency funding is requested? \_\_\_\_\_
- Has the student applied for other sources of emergency financial relief? If yes, which ones? Did they or will they receive support from 70%?

F. **Deadline(s):** The need to establish a formal application and disbursement deadlines remains to be determined; the recommended disbursement deadline for

Group 2 is to have the Request Form submitted by May 15 and funds disbursed by May 31, 2020.

### III. **Group 3: Specific Circumstances**

10% of the funding (\$1,184,265) will support student groups adversely affected by the sudden change in the delivery of student-related programming, or with university service, as a direct result of institutional responses to COVID-19 pandemic measures. This resource will enable departments and university leadership to identify and refer uniquely situated students who were uniquely impacted. The funding for group will be distributed in \$1000 and \$500 allotments to students. These resources will be distributed to all like-impacted students equally as a result of the unintended consequences independent of student need scores.

#### A. **Cohort:**

- a. FASFA submitting students, including undergraduate, graduate, and professional school students at UNLV during the Spring 2020 semester.
- b. Students must be identified by a UNLV faculty member, administrative faculty, or staff member with first-hand knowledge to a level of impactedness directly related to university programming initiatives.
- c. Eligible students must not have received funds through Group 1 or Group 2 processing.

#### B. **Estimated number of students:** Up to 1,750

Examples of known groups include: Housing, Study Abroad, International, Department/School/Program-specific, SAP disqualifiers, etc.

#### C. **Assumptions:**

- a. Students must be identified by a faculty member, university administrative faculty, or staff to be considered. University personnel will be invited to identify uniquely impacted students they have witnessed experience unique impactedness to COVID-19 the pandemic environment.
- b. Students who receive Group 1 or Group 2 funding are not eligible for consideration in Group 3 resources.
- c. Eligibility: Students must have completed a FAFSA or can demonstrate their eligibility to receive Title IV funding to receive funds.
- d. Confirmation: Students will be required to authenticate their own admission that their lives were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic before any money will disburse to them.
- e. The distribution of these funds is structured to be (i) at the discretion of the university solely for those students who have been impacted in ways that directly relate to the university's services and programs, and (ii) at the exclusive discretion of the university.

- f. Both graduate and undergraduate students are eligible to receive funds from this funding source.
- D. **Awarding Format:** Funds will be distributed with specific dollar values (\$1,000 and \$500 increments) and distributed with respect to the level of impactedness identified.
- a. Who authorizes the approval for each request?
    - i. A small committee of 3-5 persons, with at least one member represents the Provost's Office, the Vice President of Student Affairs, the Graduate College/Council, CSUN, and the Faculty Senate.
      - 1. The same committee reviews cases for both Group 2 and Group 3 requests.
    - ii. These individuals will represent aspects of greater university experience and will be more available to meet and review files in a timely manner.
    - iii. To the greatest extent possible, these committee members will evaluate all the conditions equally, maintaining consistency in evaluation and continuity in terms of equity among and across requests that come before them.
    - iv. These committee members will score each request and the request will be stored permanently (digitally) for use later for inclusion with any future reference to the procedure, including but not limited to, an audit review.
  - b. How much money is to be awarded?
    - i. The committee will have the autonomy to recommend an allotment that is consistent with the level of impact the students experienced.
    - ii. All the participating individuals will receive the same allotment, regardless of personal need characteristics, financial aid packaging, or FAFSA submission requirements. The assumption is that those who participated in a university experience that was affected by COVID-19 global pandemic measures share the same level of fiscal reprieve.
    - iii. The committee will grade the request form and assign a dollar value for the affliction perceived within the request that was considered.
      - 1. The committee has the flexibility to award any combination of shares to accommodate what it deems a fair compensation for the inconvenience.
      - 2. The committee must acknowledge the relative scope of the awards.
        - a. The typical amount that this committee can award to students is \$500 and \$1,000.

- E. **Awarding Rubric:** 100-Point Assessment of Departmental award request (form in progress)
- a. Identify the individual volunteering the information what program you are responsible in which the impacted students were participating?
  - b. Identify students participating in the program.
    - i. How many? Specify name/ID of the students.
  - c. Describe the level of non-fiscal impact that participating students experienced? (Had to drop classes early, return from abroad, unable to travel, etc.)
    - i. 30 points - Most important
  - d. Describe the level of fiscal impact that participating students experienced? (loss/increased costs of flights, extended stay in residence halls, computer software/hardware, preparation costs to be remote, etc.)
    - i. 30 points – Most important
  - e. Describe any post-programmatic impact that may have occurred in the time since the experience concluded. (Repeat courses, unable to study abroad, opportunity no longer available, lost credits, etc.)
    - i. 20 points - Next most important
  - f. Estimate the cost per person (in actual dollars) that the experience created for participating students? Explain that estimate?
    - i. 10 points - Important
  - g. Describe whether the resulting experience creates a hardship for the students moving forward at the university that you might be aware of?
    - i. 10 points - Important
- F. **Deadline(s):** The need to establish identification and disbursement deadlines remains to be determined; the recommended disbursement deadline for Group 3 is to have the students identified by May 15 and funds disbursed by May 31, 2020.