

Lee to receive \$4m from CARES Act

Lee College will receive a little more than \$4 million from the federal Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund as part of the \$14 billion in support for colleges and universities and their students under the recently passed Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Of the more than \$4 million, half of the money — or approximately \$2 million — will be earmarked for emergency financial aid grants for Lee College students.

From its share of the funding, Lee College will award cash grants to students to pay for expenses related to the COVID-19 outbreak, including materials and technology, food, housing, and childcare. Lee College President, Dr. Lynda Villanueva, has appointed a task force to develop a plan for distributing the money to students. The group, which is working on a tight deadline, plan to begin disbursements as soon as possible. Details on how students can apply for the emergency aid will be shared broadly as soon as they are available.

These federal dollars will supplement Lee College's ongoing efforts to provide financial relief for students in need of assistance. Since the pandemic began, Lee College has provided aid to more than 150 students who suffered expenses related to COVID-19 disruptions, including Chromebook computers and food.

The Department of Education plans to announce guidance for the second half of the funds allocated to post-secondary institutions — in Lee College's case, approximately \$2 million — in the next two weeks. This funding is intended for direct institutional use to cover costs associated with changes to educational delivery and campus operations as a result of coronavirus disruptions. Lee College wants to use these federal stimulus funds to pay for student tuition and lessen the impacts of the pandemic on the college's student body.

The CARES Act provides \$31 billion overall for education aid at all levels, including \$14 billion in funding to institutions of higher education and students. The Department of Education based college awards on two factors: the share of recipients of federal Pell Grants, and overall undergraduate enrollment numbers.