



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 12, 2020

Contact: John Gordon, Jr., Director of Communications
202.274.5998 (o); 202.701.8805 (c); john.gordon@udc.edu

UDC DISTRIBUTES EMERGENCY FUNDS TO STUDENTS SEVERELY IMPACTED BY COVID-19

WASHINGTON, DC— The University of the District of Columbia (UDC) has distributed nearly \$600,000 of the \$1.8 million received by the University last month as part of the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. By law, those funds are meant to provide direct aid for students who have lost jobs and incurred expenses related to the disruption of campus operations due to COVID-19.

“As the public health crisis continues, the hardships—financial and otherwise—continue to be felt deeply and widely by our students,” said Dr. William Latham, UDC’s Chief Student Development and Success Officer. “The well-being and success of our students remain our top priorities, and we are committed to doing all that we can to support them during this incredibly challenging time.”

Latham says the federal aid is dispensed as a one-time emergency grant, and is not intended to provide ongoing relief. UDC aims to quickly identify students who need help through a streamlined application process that requires no paperwork or documentation. So far, nearly 1,100 students have applied for assistance, and more than 800 grants totaling \$586,304 have been administered to date.

“Students who are currently eligible for federal funds simply acknowledge a financial hardship resulting from COVID-19 and choose the basic living expenses that they need help paying, including housing, food and utility bills,” said Nailah Williams, the University’s Interim Associate Vice President of Enrollment Services. “We intended to make the process as equitable and as easy as possible, so that every eligible student gets as much aid that we can provide, as quickly as possible.”

Williams says that funding amounts vary according to need, with housing relief, food, and technology support being the top three requests. The average grant award of \$700 is dispensed via direct deposit into student accounts. The application period is open through May 29, or until funds are exhausted.

The recently designated CARES funding is one of several ways that UDC is addressing the needs of students challenged by this unprecedented public health crisis. Additionally, all students who are eligible for federal work study will continue to receive their normal pay—regardless of whether they are working or not. Refunds for certain student fees are also being returned, and free mental health counseling is being provided to help relieve COVID-related stress.

“The moment we ceased campus operations, we started looking at what we could do to help our students,” said Latham. “Firebirds are resilient, but we’re hearing a lot of frustration and uncertainty from our students. We’re here to help them.”

The UDC Foundation has established a student hardship fund and is raising private donations to help international students and others not eligible for federal aid. Please visit, <https://www.udc.edu/emergency-student-assistance-fund/> for information on how to make a contribution to support this effort.

###