



WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY COVID-19 UPDATE

April 15, 2020

Wichita State planning further student financial assistance; considering budget reductions related to pandemic

With online and/or remote instruction up and running and the university settling into a routine of managing and continuing operations while practicing social distancing, our thoughts and planning activities have turned toward the future and the potential long-term impact that COVID-19 will have on our campus community. The university continues to evaluate and explore all options and no decisions have been made on a path forward. But, we want to share with you a few topics of current conversation.

Student emergency funds

At every level of the university, we are striving to remain in close touch with our students, knowing that staying close as a community, and caring for each other, is the best way to work through the many difficulties of the pandemic. We are thrilled to share that we have already begun providing financial support for students with the greatest needs and expect to be able to continue to do so over the next several months.

The WSU Foundation and its donors have established the COVID-19 Student Emergency Fund to provide qualifying students with short-term financial assistance of up to \$500. More than \$67,000 has been raised thus far, including contributions from faculty and staff. These dollars have helped more than 70 students and additional applications continue to be received

and reviewed on a daily basis. For more information and to download an application, please visit www.wichita.edu/finaidcovid19.

CARES Act

On March 25, 2020, Congress approved the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. This Act, through the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund, allocated funding to colleges and universities to help institutions and students deal with the unprecedented financial struggles of COVID-19. Half of the funds received by WSU, approximately \$4.4 million, must be used to provide emergency financial aid to students who have unanticipated expenses associated with the disruption of learning on campus due to Coronavirus. This emergency aid is intended to cover eligible expenses under a student's cost of attendance, such as food, housing, course materials, technology, health care and child care.

The Department of Education issued its first guidance on CARES Act funding on April 9, 2020, encouraging institutions to prioritize its students with the greatest need. We expect additional guidance from the Department of Education and other sources regarding distribution of these funds in the coming days and weeks. We are now working through details of getting and distributing these funds and are working diligently on a plan that will allow us to provide the maximum benefit to our students in need based on the guidance provided.

We will provide our campus community with updates through the Shocker Blast newsletter and other channels.

Faculty, staff and operations

WSU is dealing with the same issues that universities across the nation and world are addressing at the same time. We know the human and financial damage from the pandemic will be large, but it may be many months, even years, until we understand the full impact.

The university receives financial support from four primary revenue streams: student tuition and fees, state aid, funded research, and philanthropy. All of

these streams are currently strained due to COVID-19 and we have no idea when or if they will return to normal.

Additionally, the uncertainty around things like enrollment for summer and fall, receipt of federal and state aid, and the ability to return to in-person instruction limits our ability to accurately assess what changes will be required, both operationally and financially, of our institution.

As Provost Rick Muma shared with the Faculty Senate Monday:

- WSU has a projected \$6.5 million shortfall in tuition revenue and no clear indication of how state funding may change.
- It is possible that these declines may be partially offset by funds received by WSU under the CARES Act or other legislation, but we have not yet received any guidance from either the federal or state government.
- The university has already implemented several cost-saving measures (i.e., hiring freeze, restrictions on discretionary spending) and understands that others may be needed (i.e., employee furlough, temporary salary reduction, etc.) as we strive to remain fiscally responsible.
- After having no tuition increase for the current year, the university may ask the Kansas Board of Regents for an increase next year.

There are also key drivers of the university's success that aren't part of the main university budget but are important to the excellence of the university and the student experience. These include WSU Tech and all of the high schools and community colleges that prepare students for the university; Wichita State Athletics; the Rhatigan Student Center and Shocker Stores; the WSU Foundation; and the Alumni Association.

We will continue to work with and seek the advice of the campus-wide Budget Advisory Committee to consider different scenarios, based on the length of the pandemic and its financial impact.

We do not tell you these things to alarm you, but rather to provide context around some of the conversations you may be hearing. Nothing is for

certain at this point, and no plans have been made. We will continue to communicate with our campus community as we navigate this difficult road.

We are living through an unprecedented time in history, but we will find our way through this together.

We appreciate your courage, your kindness, your grace and your caring for each other as we move forward.

Sincerely,

President Jay Golden and Provost Rick Muma

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