



GTU

Office of Financial Aid

Supplemental Assistance to Institutions of Higher Education (SAIHE)

January 10, 2022 Quarterly Report

Reporting Period: October 1, 2021-December 31, 2021

Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF II)

On March 29, 2021, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) issued a notice announcing the availability of funds under the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF), Supplemental Assistance to Institutions of Higher Education (SAIHE). The SAIHE program supports Institutions that the Secretary determines, after allocating funds under [section 314\(a\)](#) of the CRRSAA, have unmet need related to the coronavirus.

There are seven priority groups that ED has categorized as meeting the statutory focus of having additional need related to institutional and student costs associated with the coronavirus. The GTU falls under priority group 7 which provides additional support to institutions with high percentages of graduate students. Under this priority, ED is awarding funds to eligible institutions for which graduate students are 90 percent or more of their student population.

On April 26, 2021, the GTU's President signed the SAIHE Program Profile Information Form and a Certification and Agreement certifying that the allocation will be used in accordance with the CARES Act and all other applicable federal laws. The Senior Director for Financial Aid and Enrollment completed the online application and uploaded the SAIHE Program Profile and the Certification Agreement using the Grants.gov portal.

The certifying official and project director received a Grant Award Notification (GAN) from ED on August 24, 2021 authorizing an allocation of \$85,255 to be distributed between July 31, 2021 and July 31, 2022. ED used the number of graduate students enrolled at the GTU as reported on the SAIHE Program Profile Information Form to calculate the allocation.

Project Award Number: P425210061

Certifying Official: Uriah Kim, President

Recipient Project Director: Chaitanya Motupalli, Director of Student Life and International Student & Scholars

Education Program Contact: Mose Cartier II, Department of ED

Any student continuously enrolled at the GTU in Fall 2021 who experienced hardship due to the coronavirus and whose expenses were incurred after March 13, 2020, the date of the declaration of the national emergency ([85 FR 15337](#)), is eligible. Furthermore, [ED's final rule](#) on student eligibility for HEERF states that all students enrolled in an institution of higher education during the COVID-19 national emergency are eligible regardless of whether or not they completed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or are Title IV eligible, including U.S. citizens, eligible non-citizens and international students.

The Financial Aid Office identified 177 degree students actively registered for the Fall 2021 term and the Associate Dean of Students confirmed their enrollment statuses to ensure all eligible students were given the opportunity to apply. Due to the limited allocation, the determination was made by the Emergency Relief Fund Committee, comprised of the Associate Dean of Students, the Director for Student Life and International Students & Scholars and the Senior Director for Financial Aid and Enrollment, to limit the applicant pool only to students who are currently enrolled.

The Director for Student Life and International Students & Scholars sent an email inviting these students to apply online for emergency aid based on their individual circumstances (See Appendix A). A total of 44 students applied of which 16 were U.S. citizens and eligible non-citizens and 28 were international.

In accordance with [section 314\(c\)](#) of the CRRSAA, the GTU must use these emergency funds to make financial grants to students and may be used for any component of their Cost of Attendance (COA) for emergency costs that arise due to the coronavirus such as tuition, food, housing, healthcare (including mental healthcare), or childcare.

The SAIHE program under the [CRRSAA](#) requires that institutions prioritize students with exceptional need, such as those who have faced significant unexpected expenses that affect their financial circumstances, such as the loss of employment, reduced income, and food or housing insecurity. The CRRSAA guidelines are similar to the [CARES Act](#) however the cost of tuition may be considered as an allowable expense.

The Emergency Relief Fund Committee convened several times to discuss and ensure that the rubric was fair and equitable and deliberated these requests to verify that all claimed expenses were eligible as a result of the disruption of campus operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Students were ranked according to their most urgent need and the amount of their request. Highest priority was given to those with housing, income and childcare expenses, followed by those with books and supplies expenses, and least priority was given to tuition support and non-emergency travel expenses but would be considered if funding allowed. The committee was able to fund all requests for emergency aid.

Domestic student grants ranged between \$600 and \$800. International students were granted a standard amount of \$1,000 given that they do not have the option to borrow federal student loans. Of these requests, an amount of \$39,500 was distributed and an email was sent to all recipients to notify them of their aid and the amount granted (see Appendix B). Emergency aid was disbursed by the Business Office to students between November 11 and November 23, 2021.

[ED guidelines](#) stipulate that the GTU must receive affirmative consent before using emergency aid to satisfy an outstanding account balance. For that reason, the Director for Student Life and International Students & Scholars notified the students who requested that the grant credit to their student account and to confirm with them how they wished to receive their aid; posted directly to their student account to offset a tuition balance or by check or direct deposit.

The GTU received a CARES Act HEERF Tranche 2 Institutional Share GAN on May 12, 2020 authorizing an allocation of \$29,534 of to be used between May 11, 2020 and May 10, 2021. The GTU's CFO and VP for Finance, designated \$21,600 of the allocation to be used for grants to students. Six students who applied for the student share of HEERF were granted emergency aid ranging from \$300 to \$5,300 that was distributed from September 9, 2020 to October 30, 2020 ([See GTU HEERF Quarterly Report, Emergency Federal Financial Aid Grants – Institutional Share](#)).

Due to costs related to the E-Lab that were not anticipated, in consultation with the CFO and VP for Finance, this distribution of student emergency grants was redirected to the SAIHE allotment. Prior to redirecting these funds, the Financial Aid Office confirmed that these students qualified for emergency aid under the SAIHE eligibility requirements.

A total amount of \$61,100 in SAIHE funding has been distributed to date with \$24,155 remaining. Our intent is to allow for the opportunity to designate additional funds in late fall and early spring to students who have not previously applied and to those who express a need for additional emergency aid as students continue to experience financial hardships throughout this ongoing pandemic.

The Financial Aid Office added the emergency grants to student records utilizing the GTU's Financial Aid Management System (FAMS). To ensure accuracy, a report was generated and shared with the Associate Dean of Students and the Director for Student Life and International Students & Scholars to confirm the totals for each recipient. A final crosscheck was performed by the Senior Director for Financial Aid and Enrollment.

Prior to sending disbursement files to the Business Office for final processing, the Financial Aid Office provided an Anticipated Aid report of all emergency aid recipients to cross-check charges against financial aid and to calculate a balance due or a credit refund. The report identified those who requested that their aid post to directly to their student account to offset a balance due

The Office of Postsecondary Education published [guidance](#) in January 2021 reminding financial aid administrators that they may make use of the professional judgment (PJ) adjustment authority as needed. The Financial Aid Office may use PJ to adjust data that determines a student's EFC however, there must be a significant change in order to be considered for PJ. The recalculation may result in a revision to the EFC and any significant change may result in additional need-based aid. The FAO may also use PJ to make adjustments to costs within the COA components that may result in borrowing additional federal student loans.

U.S. citizen and eligible non-citizen applicants were evaluated by the Financial Aid Office to determine if a PJ was warranted based on COA elements in cases where their request was greater than the amount granted. It was determined that no adjustments were necessary. All of the students borrowed up to their annual unsubsidized eligibility and have the latitude in their COA for additional funds. These students may request additional SAIHE emergency aid or initiate the Federal Direct Graduate PLUS Loan process.

Appendix A

Dear All,

*GTU has recently received funding through the Supplemental Assistance to Institutions of Higher Education (SAIHE) Program of the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act 2021 (CRRSAA). This funding allows us to provide federal grants to students (**both** domestic and international) for the following purposes:*

- 1) To cover any component of the student's cost of attendance (COA); and*
- 2) Emergency costs that might have arisen due to Coronavirus, such as but not limited to tuition, food, housing, health care, mental health care, or childcare.*

These grants will range from \$ 400 to \$ 800 (with some exceptions made based on the applicant's circumstances) and not be considered institutional financial aid or affect financial aid eligibility.

*If you wish to apply for these grants, please submit [this application](https://forms.gle/R63V9h2745NCA5pcA) (you can also access the application using this link: <https://forms.gle/R63V9h2745NCA5pcA>) by **5 pm on Friday the 22nd of October 2021**.*

Appendix B

Dear Student,

Thank you for applying for grants made possible by the Supplemental Assistance to Institutions of Higher Education (SAIHE)! The GTU's Emergency Relief Fund Committee has carefully reviewed your application and approved a payment of \$XXX.XX to meet the emergency needs highlighted therein. The funds will be disbursed as requested in your application.

The committee sincerely hopes this grant will help provide some relief during this challenging time.