More than 500 faculty and staff members donate to funds supporting students

University of Arizona Foundation
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Nearly 550 University of Arizona employees have donated more than $77,000 to the Fuel the Response crowdfunding campaign, which was launched to support students facing negative financial impacts due to COVID-19.

About 1,100 people have donated to the campaign, which is raising money for the Student Emergency Fund and the Campus Pantry.

The campaign was launched by the University of Arizona Foundation, the Dean of Students Office and university leadership to support students, many of whom have lost their jobs. Some have needed to find alternate housing or have faced new child care costs.

"We have worked to make this process simple so that we can speed funds directly to those most in need," University President Robert C. Robbins said in a video message. "Your support means so much to individual students who are absolutely struggling today with financial hardship as a result of this staggering pandemic."

A total of about $505,000 has been collected.

One employee who donated money to the Student Emergency Fund is Thomas O. McDonald, chief of staff in the Office of Business Affairs. He said he gave because he has been inspired daily by the "dedication of our University community."

"Today's students are tomorrow's colleagues, helping us solve the next grand challenge," McDonald said. "I was glad to have a chance to add my contribution, which, when combined with others, could mean helping a student stay on their path to earning a degree."

All enrolled students are eligible to apply for help from the Student Emergency Fund, said Associate Dean of Students Chrissy Lieberman. A committee composed of employees who regularly work with students facing housing and food insecurity reviews each application. They check to ensure an award wouldn't jeopardize any other financial aid and look for other funding sources, such as fellowships for graduate students. After this process, it takes about three days for a check to be mailed to the student.

The Dean of Students Office helps students who are not awarded funds to access other resources. Students who receive emergency funds also are made aware of university and community organizations that can help them, Lieberman said.

"Whatever money we give will be helpful, but it's also important for the students to know about all of their resources so they can stretch those dollars as far as they can," she said.

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