

# WEEKLY UPDATE



May 11, 2020

Happy Monday!

Many people were involved in making our “virtual ceremony” a memorable event for our graduates. While a video could never replace the unique excitement of cap and gown, we still marked this rite of passage for nearly 300 graduates over the weekend. ***Thank you for supporting these students to the finish line.***

Last Friday, we dispersed a significant portion of our federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) monies. We were allotted \$402,849 in assistance to be given directly to students who met specific qualifications. Financial Aid Director Sheila Johns provided scenarios that followed guidance from the Department of Education. We opted for a combination of direct grants to qualified students and a supplemental application process for additional support for extraordinary circumstances. In total, 505 students will receive checks for direct aid based on Expected Family Contribution (EFC) from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and number of enrolled credits for the semester. Checks ranged from \$250 to \$800, with 246 students receiving the maximum award.

Our work in diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) is critical to our future. Accordingly, we began a purposeful transition for the Multicultural and Inclusion Office last week. Paula Abbott will be taking on the role of Executive Director for Partnerships and Inclusion, reporting directly to me. Among her responsibilities will be nurturing partnerships across the Panhandle, discovering opportunities to serve our communities. With her previous success in the southern tier, we have a strong base on which to build. Maricia Guzman will report to Paula, with a focus on our continued work in the inclusion arena. This new, elevated structure appropriately recognizes all of our stakeholders and provides for better communication and planning across our institution. Please join me in thanking Paula and Maricia for their commitment, not only in serving our students, but also in supporting our community members throughout the Panhandle.

Wednesday marks the final contract day for our faculty members. As they unplug, our staff will begin a careful transition – one leading back to the college. We are taking our time in resettling back into our normal routines, especially given that many families are still impacted by the pandemic in multiple ways. Next Monday, our doors will remain locked to the public, but we will be working with more staff onsite. Thank you, everyone, for your flexibility, commitment and resilience over these past several weeks.

As always, if you have questions, concerns, or insights to share, please let me know.

Hope you have a great week!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Carmen M. Simone'.

Carmen M. Simone, Ph.D.  
President

WNCC assures learning opportunities for all – **enriching** lives,  
**invigorating** communities, **creating** futures