

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **SBCC Foundation Provides \$2 Million in Assistance to Students Through COVID-19 Emergency Grant Fund**

SANTA BARBARA, CA – Four weeks ago, the SBCC Foundation sprang into action to support SBCC students as they faced multiple challenges resulting from the COVID-19 health crisis: having all college classes rapidly moved online, loss of paid work, homeschooling of children, and more.

“When a crisis hits, philanthropy has a unique role to play. Community-based organizations can immediately move resources to help bridge the gap between initial shock and the eventual arrival of public assistance and other community responses,” said SBCC Foundation CEO Geoff Green. “The SBCC Foundation was in a position to ensure that students who were facing the sudden loss of wages could find some financial stability while they figured out how to navigate the public health crisis and resulting economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.”

On March 30, the SBCC Foundation launched the ***largest Emergency Grant program in its history*** to help students with immediate financial needs. One-time grants of up to \$1,000 per student have helped cover such costs as housing, food, childcare, and other essential items, including the technology and internet access necessary for students to continue their education remotely. The Foundation received over 2,300 requests between Monday, March 30 and Friday, April 24. In all, the SBCC Foundation will be providing approximately \$2 million in assistance.

Below are a couple of the many messages of gratitude sent by students who received emergency grants:

“I am a first-generation, low-income student who has been financially independent since I was 17 years old. I was working three jobs while taking organic chemistry and physics classes at SBCC. Due to the Coronavirus I lost two of those jobs, which were my main source of income. I have no idea when I'll be able to return to work, and currently have no income. Thank you! This is an amazing resource the SBCC Foundation is offering to students and I am eternally grateful.” – J. Tellez

“I am so relieved to have a source of income this month. I have already used some of the money to purchase groceries and pay my bills. The rest will be put toward my rent this month. I feel so honored and appreciative to all the donors who have come together to support our community during this tough time. This money has not only helped me financially, but emotionally, as it has taken a huge load off of my shoulders. With less stress, I am better able to focus on my studies, and for that I am endlessly thankful. Thank you so much for your help. It is my dream to one day return the favor by offering a helping hand to a college student in need.” – S. Cunningham

In concert with public health guidelines issued by federal, state, and local governments, SBCC leadership took decisive steps to limit health risks to SBCC students, faculty, staff, and the community at large. All classes that could be were converted to an online format effective Monday, March 16. All instruction through the remainder of the spring semester, as well as both summer sessions, will be exclusively online. In step with the college, all Foundation staff have been working remotely since March 16.

SBCC Foundation staff managed the COVID-19 Emergency Grant program remotely from locations throughout Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. A four-member team (with support from the entire staff) led the effort to organize student requests, assess needs, verify information, award grants, and track payments. The SBCC Office of Admissions & Records was a crucial partner in the effort. The Foundation used checks, direct deposit, and occasionally Venmo and PayPal to distribute funds. Applications were available in both Spanish and English. To be eligible, students must have been enrolled in the Spring 2020 semester as of Friday, March 13, the last day of classroom instruction on campus.

The COVID-19 SBCC Student Emergency Grant program closed on Friday, April 24 in anticipation of the arrival of CARES Act funds. Future emergency grant programs are being considered and donations are being accepted for ongoing student emergency grant needs at [www.sbccfoundation.org](http://www.sbccfoundation.org).

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### **About the SBCC Foundation**

The SBCC Foundation has provided Santa Barbara City College with private philanthropic support since 1976, serving as the vehicle through which individuals and organizations may invest in the college and its students. As an independent 501c3 nonprofit organization and partner to SBCC, the SBCC Foundation awards more than \$5 million annually for student success programs, scholarships, book grants, emergency funds, and other critical needs of the college. For more than four decades, the resources raised and managed by the SBCC Foundation have supported SBCC students as they prepare for careers, transfer to four-year universities, and pursue lifelong learning goals.

In 2016, the Foundation launched the SBCC Promise, offering all recent, local high school graduates the opportunity to attend SBCC full-time at no cost. The SBCC Promise relies entirely on private support and covers all required fees, books, and supplies for up to two years. To date, more than 3,000 local students have participated in the SBCC Promise. By removing financial barriers, the SBCC Promise ensures that SBCC's life-changing educational programs are fully accessible to all local students. For more information, visit [sbccfoundation.org](http://sbccfoundation.org)