STATE BOARD OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES
Allocation for Golden LEAF Scholars COVID-19 Fund – Two-Year Colleges
FY 2020-21

Request: The State Board of Community Colleges is requested to approve the expenditure of grant funds totaling $500,000 for allocations to colleges for the Golden LEAF Scholars COVID-19 Fund.

Strategic Plan References:
Theme: Student Interest and Access
Goal: Increase the percentage of North Carolinians, particularly within underserved populations, pursuing and easily accessing education or training through North Carolina community colleges.

- Objective 1.3. Identify and reduce access barriers for all prospective students, particularly among underserved populations.
  - Strategy 1.3.1. Improve and augment existing financial assistance programs and services to better assist students with educational costs, particularly costs beyond tuition and fees (e.g., books, transportation, child care, etc.).

Background: Since 2001, the NCCCS has received grants from the Golden LEAF Foundation to be used for student scholarships. Thousands of community college students have received scholarship funds from this program. At the request of the Golden LEAF Foundation the program was redesigned in 2011 to better reflect their goal of providing economic assistance to rural low economic areas of the state.

Rationale: To address the additional financial challenges to students during the COVID-19 pandemic, Golden LEAF has approved the allocation of an additional $500,000 for the 2019-20 year (“Golden LEAF Scholars COVID-19 Fund”). As stipulated by Golden LEAF, these funds may only be allocated to colleges participating in the 2019-20 program that have exhausted their initial funds, and colleges must continue to provide 25% of funds to eligible continuing occupational education students enrolled in at least a 96-hour program leading to a credential. Scholarships are limited to students who demonstrate financial need and reside in a rural county that is tobacco dependent.

Given the short timeframe and immediate student needs, the System Office has begun collecting needed information from colleges, and if approved by the State Board, expects to be able to award funds the week of April 20, 2020. If there are more initial requests than funds available, awards will be made on a pro-rata basis. If funds remain after the first allocation, colleges may access the funds on a first-come, first-served basis.

Time Period: The grant cycle runs from April 17, 2020 through June 30, 2020. Any funds not expended by June 30, shall be carried forward to be used during the 2020-21 academic year after colleges have exhausted regular 2020-21 funds.
**Fund Source and Availability:** Funding is available from a grant award from the Golden LEAF Foundation.

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