

AICUNJ Response During COVID-19

New Jersey Independent Colleges and Universities have had a critical impact on their New Jersey university communities throughout the COVID-19 pandemic in the following ways:

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Virtual Education Career Fair

On Friday, May 1st, the Independent Colleges and Universities for NJ (ICUNJ) held its very first Virtual Education Career Fair. It was open to all students and alumni from New Jersey's 14 Independent Colleges and Universities who have an interest in jobs and/or careers in education.

Almost 150 job seekers, a combination of both ICUNJ students and alumni, pre-registered for the event. Twenty-two New Jersey school districts and an education staffing firm were at the ready via the Zoom platform to meet with candidates. Participants held real-time, one-on-one conversations with hiring managers in the education sector.

The career fair was a three-hour event that took place from 3pm to 6pm. The first two hours were open for "drop-in" screening interviews with all school districts. Candidates were invited to log into an employer of interest's "Zoom room" to discuss opportunities one-on-one. Job seekers sometimes had to wait their turn to speak to the next available hiring manager. The final hour was reserved for "appointment only" interviews, where employers, based on conversations from the first two hours, invited candidates to return to speak with them.

Representatives from the school districts as well as students and alum, reported that it was a good experience overall, and very much appreciated the opportunity to connect in this way in spite of stay-at-home orders.

CARES Act Distribution

Many AICUNJ institutions have begun distributing the first installment of Federal CARES Act Funding this month to assist students affected by COVID-19. The act provides \$2 trillion in aid—including \$14 billion for the nation's colleges and universities—to mitigate the economic impact of the crisis. In New Jersey, colleges and universities, technical and trade schools, and seminaries are sharing \$323 million in aid administered through the U.S. Department of Education. The first installment of each institution's grant, representing 50 percent of the funding, must be distributed to eligible students on the respective campuses, while the second installment of funding through the CARES Act will directly aid universities across the country which have experienced financial losses due to the pandemic. AICUNJ institutions, excluding Princeton, are sharing about \$40 million, half of which must go to students, the other half supports about 20%-25% of the preliminary estimate of \$80-\$100 million in costs for spring and summer.

ICFNJ Emergency Aid Fund

Donation solicitations have begun for ICFNJ Emergency Aid Fund. The Independent College Fund of New Jersey continues to fulfill its mission of empowering students to realize their goals. The Emergency Aid Fund helps students address a financial crisis brought on by unforeseen circumstances and continue in their promising college career.

The Emergency Aid Fund benefits independent college students by helping them address unexpected financial circumstances created by a sudden health emergency; an unexpected loss of income or introduced expense; death in the family or other family emergency; transportation disruption; or rent in arrears or a risk of eviction. Any unexpected crisis can become the defining factor in a student's ability to continue their college education. The necessity of this Fund has never been greater now that our students and their families are facing the COVID-19 pandemic and its many effects.

The Emergency Aid Fund is available to full-time students with an acceptable minimum GPA. All students seeking Emergency Aid Funds will complete an application for review by an ICFNJ committee of staff and trustees.

Application for assistance is not a guarantee of funding.

Press Release: Stay In New Jersey

The Independent Colleges and Universities in New Jersey are appealing to local families considering college choice alternatives due to COVID.

Read the [press release](#).

Virtual Graduations

All of our member institutions celebrated their graduates with virtual commencement ceremonies and on-line celebrations this month for the first time in their collective histories due to restrictions caused by the pandemic. Though not what anyone expected at the beginning of the Spring 2020 semester, the virtual graduations were well received, and universities were very creative in how they honored their graduates this month. Despite the commencement ceremonies being virtual, degrees were actually conferred for all graduates. Some institutions are still planning in-person commencement ceremonies at a later time when gatherings are once again permitted.

Student Voices

This has been an all but ordinary semester for college students, but our scholars have adapted and endured amid the pandemic and have responded with strength and commitment. They are [very grateful](#) for your ongoing support.

Roksana Korbi, one of our scholarship students and a recent graduate from Caldwell University shares what she's been up to this last semester in this brief [testimonial](#).

Upcoming Board Meeting

Mark your calendars! The next ICFNJ Board of Trustees meeting will be held via Zoom on June 8, 2020 at 4:00pm. We hope you'll be able to join us.