

features

The student emergency fund



Students showing gratitude for AU donors.

ASHLAND.EDU

STEVE SHRENKEL
Reporter

An unexpected emergency can happen to anyone at any point in time. Students at Ashland University may face an emergency they cannot tackle alone. AU’s student emergency fund was established in hopes it would help with exactly that.

The student emergency fund is a donor-supported fund AU students can use to apply for grant money during an unforeseen personal crisis.

Amanda Middis, the director of annual giving, said the fund was established to help students during an unanticipated emergency.

“The idea with the fund was that when things outside of school

funding campaign for the fund was launched last year. The campaign took place over the course of two and a half weeks in September with a goal to raise \$10,000 in donations.

The campaign was an integral part of the fund’s success thus far, Middis said.

“We surpassed our goal to raise \$10,000 during the campaign by \$2,000 last year,” she said. “We were really thrilled that in such a short amount of time, we raised so much money.”

The campaign is being re-launched this year on Oct. 1 with the same goal of raising \$10,000 in donations.

“We have the same goal as last year when it comes to the cam-

emergency fund but people continue to donate throughout the year,” Middis said. “We’ve raised a grand total of about \$45,000 for the fund.”

Students, however, are encouraged to become involved during the campaign as advocates for the fund, she said.

Students can apply to become advocates at givecampus.com where their advocacy for the fund can be tracked.

“During the campaign is the best time to become involved as a student,” Middis said. “We’re hoping that students self-educate on the fund before sharing it out on their social media to help other students see it.”

Last year, the campaign and

thank you letters that Middis received after those students were able to use the fund, she said.

One AU student who needed help with medical bills wrote, “Thank you so much for rescuing me when all around me seemed to be falling apart. I will always be grateful”

Another AU student wrote a thank you note that read, “I’m honored to be a recipient of the 2019 student emergency fund grant. I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your continued support for students who need it the most. Your support allowed me to stay in school and complete the school year.”

It is this that makes the fund worth it, Alix said.

“Those are examples of real students who went through an unexpected emergency and were able to benefit from the generosity of this fund,” Alix said. “We know that for every story we receive, there are more out there and we want to be able to provide those opportunities for students to continue to finish their education.”

This is why people donate to the fund, he said.

“We know how much unexpected situations can be a burden on a student,” Alix said. “Those examples from last year are why people donate. We’re just really excited about being able to see students benefit from this.”

The fund is open for any student to apply who is experiencing any kind of unexpected emergency that impacts their ability to continue their education, Middis said.

“Our goal it to make students more aware of when and if they qualify for this,” she said. “For example, a care-giver has passed that was helping with loans or your car has broken down and you can’t get to clinicals in nursing school”

The form to apply for the fund can be found either in the student affairs office or online on AU’s

website in the ‘giving back’ section.

After applying for help, a committee led by Robert Pool, the vice president for student affairs, looks at the application to see if it is an actual emergency or not.

“If it’s a legitimate emergency we’ll send out the application to other committee members where they review it and recommend funding where we can start giving from there,” Pool said.

It makes it a lot easier for an application to be accepted when the student has exhausted almost all of their resources, he said.

“One thing that will compel the committee to provide the funding is that students are doing everything they possibly can and this is the tip of the iceberg,” Pool said.

Pool said he wants to help as many students as he can that experience an unexpected emergency and in the end, it is all worth it.

“This fund helps me to have the confidence that students who are most vulnerable on campus can remain enrolled,” he said. “I believe that people are called to certain tasks at certain times and if I can help students reach that calling, it’s very rewarding.”

Middis said that she looks forward to seeing this fund continue to grow and to help out even more students.

“There’s a ton of opportunity for us to help students into the future,” she said. “We look forward to being able to make an impact on more students’ lives at AU.”

More information about the student emergency fund and campaign can be found on the AU webpage. An informational video with testimonials from students who have benefitted from the fund can also be found on the website.

Expense	Fall 2019	Spring 2020	Total
Tuition	\$10,475	\$10,475	\$20,950
Room on Ashland Campus (Double Occupancy)	\$2,805	\$2,805	\$5,610
Room on Mansfield Campus (Double Occupancy)	\$3,320	\$3,320	\$6,640
Board (Purple or Eagle Plan)	\$2,365	\$2,365	\$4,730
Activity/Service Fee	\$120	\$120	\$240
Campus Access Fee	\$395	\$395	\$790
TOTAL w/room on Ashland Campus	\$16,160	\$16,160	\$32,320
TOTAL w/room on Mansfield Campus	\$14,310	\$14,310	\$28,620

ASHLAND.EDU

Comprehensive rate for traditional full time undergraduate students.

impact their ability to continue their education, they’re able to turn to their school community and we can support them in that time during a personal unforeseen crisis.”

The emergency fund was established last year after Middis said some faculty at AU were already helping students in a time of need.

“Faculty were already coming along to help students who were experiencing issues that may have gotten in the way of them graduating,” Middis said. “We wanted to make it an official program that donors and faculty could get behind.”

Jeff Alix, the director of institutional advancement and alumni engagement, said this fund is one of the most direct ways to help and support students.

“We know what we’re here for and what our alumni and donors want is to support our students,” Alix said. “This is one of the most direct ways that we can help and support students. This fund allows us to have a consistent opportunity to give back.”

Middis really wanted to show students that this fund is available.

“This was something we came up with that we really wanted to show students that we had to help them stay at Ashland and finish graduating here,” Middis said.

Along with the fund, a crowd-

paign,” Middis said. “If we can surpass that once again, we would be beyond thrilled.”

The donations page for the campaign can be found at ashland.edu/alumini where there is a give button that donors can click on to make a donation to the fund.

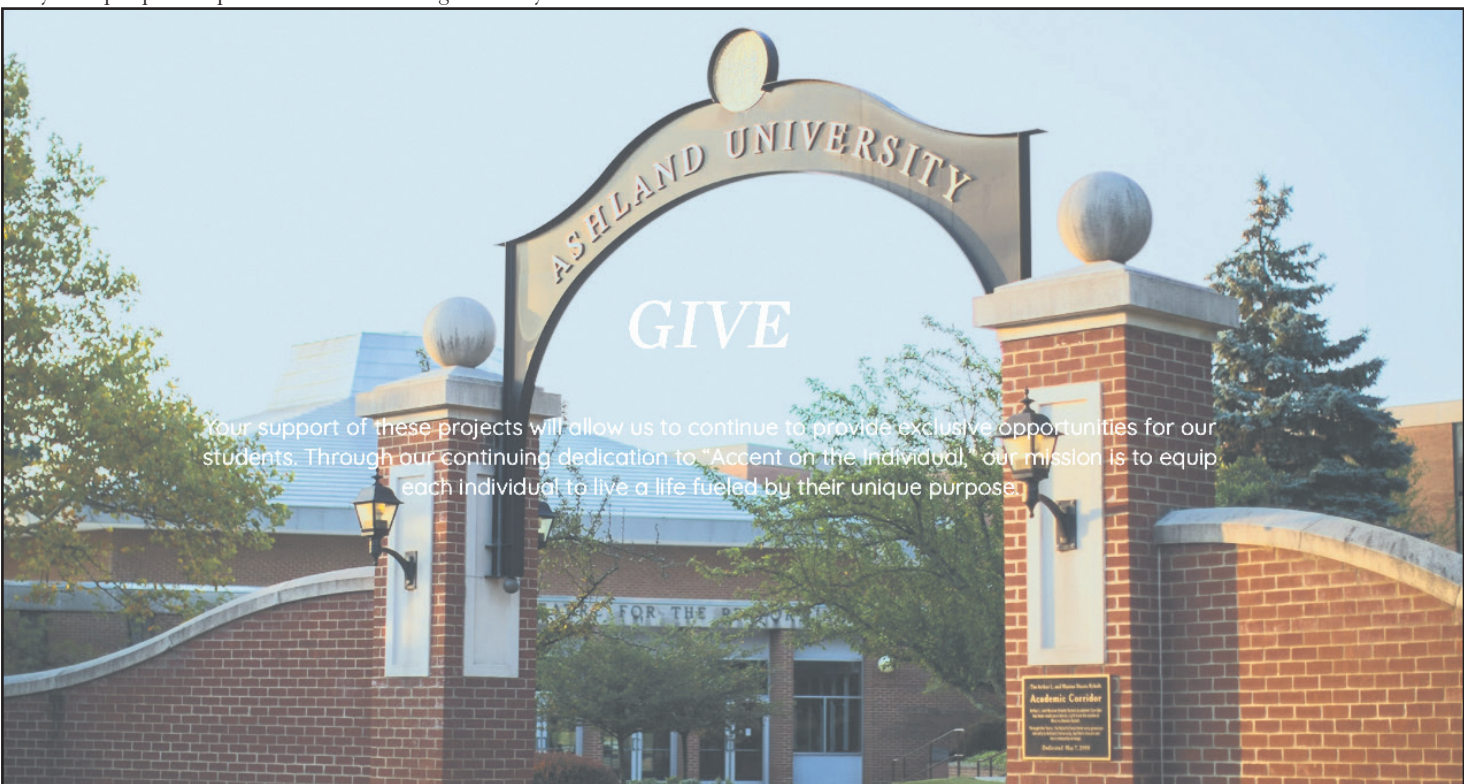
Even though the campaign is when the fund is mainly promoted, donations are still collected all throughout the year, she said.

“The campaign is when we really ramp up and promote the

fund allowed them to disperse around \$13,000 in funds to students in need, she said.

“We distributed funds to several last year,” Middis said. “Those students didn’t all get the same amount since it was based on their situation but that’s what we were able to distribute.”

Even though those students didn’t necessarily receive the same amount of help, it assisted them with their unexpected emergencies by the evidence of



Anyone can donate to the student emergency fund on AU’s webpage.

ASHLAND.EDU