



Florida Gulf Coast University hasn't raised tuition or fees in 7 years, yet the need for scholarship aid is greater than ever. The pandemic has created a perfect storm of financial need, with countless families losing their primary sources of income and many part-time jobs students relied on to help pay their way drying up.

While it's not easy to pinpoint the precise number of students in need or calculate exactly how much they require as the situation continues to change, here's what we know:



Jennifer Thrower

**Almost half of FGCU students qualify for need-based aid.**

About a third receive Pell grants, which are awarded to those whose families earn between \$20,000 and \$50,000 annually. Some students benefit from other government programs but many of these students need help to cover housing and meals, which can run \$3,000 to \$5,500 a semester. After a 12-year hiatus, Jennifer Thrower returned to school and made it work.

▶ [See Jennifer's video here.](#)



Rebecca Paul

**An impressive 44 percent of FGCU students are considered academically gifted and receive merit scholarships,**

such as Bright Futures, National Merit and others. For Naples biology major Rebecca Paul, her outstanding academic performance in high school landed her a prestigious all-inclusive Jubilee Scholarship.

▶ [See Rebecca's video here.](#)



Sesar Lorenzo Valle

**That leaves 38 percent of students who fall somewhere between and either don't qualify for enough financial aid or any at all.**

In all, that amounts to a shortfall of \$9 million. Both Sesar Lorenzo Valle, a construction management major, and alum Javon Daniels found themselves in this situation. In both cases, generous donors saved the day.

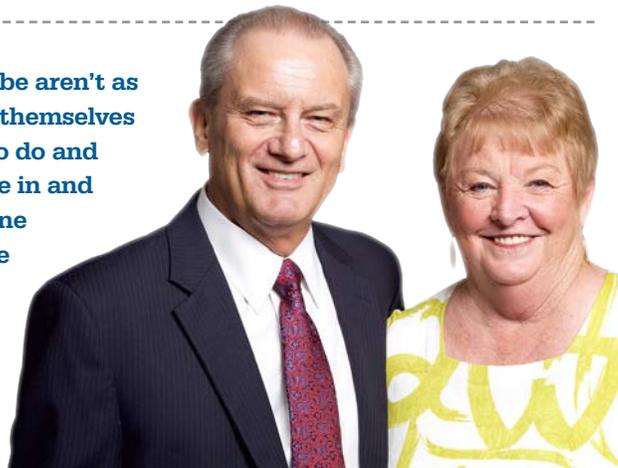
▶ [See Sesar's video here](#) and [Javon's here.](#)

**14 percent of students are the first generation of their family to attend college.**

The state of Florida offers a matching grant program to support these students, which is typically fully funded.

**"Some students in high school maybe aren't as studious then they realize they cut themselves short on what they might be able to do and come to regret it. Then people come in and show that one mistake doesn't define your life. You can go on and become more. We feel like we're doing something that is very helpful not only for the particular students, but for the community."**

**– Donna and John Schubert, donors**



# 4,274

Number of students who applied for scholarships in Fall 2020

# 1,396

Number of students who received FGCU Foundation scholarships in Fall 2020



# \$3.86M

Awarded in 2020-21



# \$2,155

Average awarded per scholarship this year

# 38%

Students whose financial needs are not met

## But that doesn't tell the whole story.

This year, COVID-19 struck more families and, therefore, more students like junior Erick Sandoval of Naples weighed taking a break from school to help their struggling families. The first in his family to graduate from high school and to attend college, help arrived just in the nick of time. He was awarded the Donald and Elizabeth Manchester Scholarship and another from a recently created fund: the FGCU Foundation Board Pandemic Fund, created by the

FGCU Foundation Board of Directors, who recognized the sudden and growing need students had for help as a result of COVID-19.

Foundation Board Treasurer Chuck Kettelman urged his fellow members to contribute, then ask their friends to match those gifts.



**Erick Sandoval**

**The result:** They raised \$55,000 in a few weeks and hope ultimately to raise \$100,000.

"I relate to this," says Linda Taylor, former Board of Trustees member and former FGCU Foundation Board chair, speaking about the pandemic fund. "I would not have been able to finish school if I had lost my job."

For Erick, it couldn't have come at a better time. "I feel so blessed," he said. "I am super thankful for this."

▶ **HOW TO HELP:** For more information or to make a gift, contact the Foundation office at **(239) 590-1067**.

[DONATE HERE](#)



**"We realized the impact the pandemic was having on our students. Many have lost their jobs or their parents have lost their jobs and the students need that cash flow to come to FGCU."**

**– Chuck Kettelman,  
FGCU Foundation  
Board treasurer**

