Office of Financial Aid Frequently Asked Questions:

1. How can I speak with a staff member about my financial aid?

A. All financial aid staff will be working remotely during the fall semester, but staff will conduct video appointments via Zoom. We will invite you to make an appointment through online scheduling after the bulk of financial aid revisions are complete. There will be dedicated staff answering the Office of Financial Aid email account throughout each business day for urgent questions.

There will be no physical access to the Financial Aid Office for students during the fall semester, but we are here to help you and to answer your questions in other ways. It is important that students read their (Amherst) email and respond to requests from our office. They should stay up-to-date on deadlines and requests for information needed to process financial aid applications.

You may also contact us via phone (413-542-2296); we will return your message as soon as we can. Please be aware that return phone calls will not be identified as ‘Amherst College.’ If you do not answer incoming calls from unknown callers or blocked callers, please provide the best time to reach you in your phone message you leave for us. We still look forward to answering your questions and speaking with you during our remote work.

2. How do I view my 2020-21 financial aid details?

A. Renewal financial aid awards for the 2020-21 academic year were released to the Financial Aid Portal (FAP) beginning on June 11th for students who had complete renewal applications. Students who have not received details of their financial aid awards should review the FAP and submit missing documents promptly. Late fees will be assessed on applications that remain incomplete after August 12. All application documents can be viewed through the Financial Aid Portal and the Documents and Messages link.

3. What options exist to request reconsideration of the financial aid offered?

A. You may ask us to review your financial aid award and the way we calculated your expected family contribution. Appeals must be in writing, and due to the fact that Amherst’s aid program is need-based, the appeal must provide us a basis for reconsidering your application - that was not included in your initial aid application. For example, if your family's 2019 financial circumstances have changed since the 2018 income information was submitted, or you believe we've overlooked a unique situation, you should include this information in your appeal. The appeal letter (or financial aid appeal form) should address changes in circumstances, unusual expenses, special situations, or additional information not already presented in the financial aid application. The Financial Aid Appeal form is available in the “Forms and Helpful Links” section of the Office of Financial Aid website.

4. What options exist to request reconsideration for financial changes occurring in 2020?

A. If your family’s financial situation has been negatively impacted by Covid-19, you have the option of requesting a Voluntary January Review in January 2021, when you can provide a complete picture of your calendar year 2020 finances. If we determine that there has been a year-long sustained decrease in income, and an adjustment in the 2020-21 family contribution is warranted, any grant aid adjustment will be for the full academic year - both the spring 2021 semester, as well as retroactively to include the fall 2020 semester.

5. If I am fully remote for the fall or spring semester, how will that affect my financial aid package?

A. If you are fully remote, you will not be charged room and board, so you can expect your directly billed costs to be lower. Your family contribution will remain the same, but the cost of attendance will be
allocated differently - towards living and personal expenses - based on billed expenses. Students studying remotely who qualify for financial aid will receive an allowance of $4,500 per semester for living expenses. The financial aid office will revise financial aid packages to reflect students who are studying remotely over the next few weeks.

6. How do I view my 2020-21 financial aid details and when will I know about a revision?

We share your desire and need for complete information to make good decisions and financial plans. We sincerely appreciate your patience as we work together to provide complete and accurate aid details. Renewal applications for the 2020-21 academic year were published in the Financial Aid Portal (FAP) beginning on June 11th. Students who have not received details of their financial aid awards should review the Documents and Messages link and submit missing documents promptly.

Award revisions will begin after students confirm their fall and spring housing plans. Emails are sent to students at their Amherst email address whenever there is a revision to financial aid awards occur.

7. How will health insurance work while enrolled remotely?

A. All enrolled students are billed for student health insurance. Financial aid recipients who do not have existing or comparable family insurance coverage, and therefore cannot waive the insurance with existing family coverage may request an Amherst College Health Scholarship. Highest need students are eligible for medical co-pay reimbursements. Students with specific concerns about reimbursements for prescription copays should contact the Office of Financial Aid.

8. Will there be remote or on-campus student jobs available for the fall?

A. It is unlikely that there will be many opportunities for students to work on-campus or remotely for Amherst. To account for this reality, the academic year, term-time student employment component of the financial aid package will be replaced with scholarship funds - just as the student income contribution/summer savings expectation was replaced with Amherst College Scholarship funds.

9. How will my financial aid be impacted by an external scholarships or employer tuition benefit?

A. Amherst College meets 100% of demonstrated financial need for all aid applicants. External scholarships or tuition benefits received by students must be reported, and typically first replace the student employment portion of a financial aid award. For 2020-21, all student income contribution/summer earnings expectation, as well as term-time (academic year) employment, have been replaced with Amherst College Scholarship funds. One hundred percent of demonstrated need has been met with these additional Amherst College Scholarship funds, so there is no remaining eligibility to utilize outside scholarships for the 2020-21 academic year. In order to receive the maximum benefit from your external scholarship, we recommend you contact the scholarship donor to ask if their funds can be deferred to future years and/or be used for a computer purchase. Written authorization from the scholarship sponsor must be sent to the Office of Financial Aid. Outside scholarships or tuition benefits cannot replace the expected family contribution.