BTC Foundation offers emergency grants to students, negotiations continue

BY SAMANTHA WILKES
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BELLAPODIA — With the first scheduled week of school ending without a single syllabus handed out to each student, Bellingham Technical College and Bellingham Education Association teachers were left in the lurch Monday, Sept. 30, over a potential court order to end the faculty strike.

While students waited for financial aid that can’t legally be dispersed until classes start, the BTC Foundation held an emergency meeting Friday morning, Sept. 27, and voted to provide emergency grants to students in need.

“We specifically identified students with the highest financial need during this time, and we corresponded with them directly,” said Dean Foster, BTC Foundation director.

However, any student waiting on financial aid can apply for the grants. Students should contact the Financial Aid Office at 360-752-8555 during business hours to see if they are eligible.

The Foundation gave $25,800 and college President Patricia McKown crisis $5,800 of her personal money to the emergency fund. Donations to the fund can be made at the BTC Foundation webpage.

“While we’re not expecting any students to pay back these $32,690 emergency grants,” Foster said, “Hopefully they’ll address some basic needs during this time, such as food, gas or a little rent money.”

Foster said the funds likely will be exhausted by Monday, so those most in need should try to contact the college right away.

This school is also filing letters for students to give landlords to appeal for extensions or rent payments coming up early next week.

BEA and BTC representatives met again Friday afternoon to discuss the school’s latest proposal.

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