Commonwealth Honors College has begun offering Community Scholarships to help keep the doors to high-quality education open for all honors students.

In a 30-day campaign, CHC aims to raise $2,500 by March 12 with small contributions from the community. Honors students, alumni, parents, and friends have the opportunity to make contributions large and small, with five levels of giving that range from a $10 “freshman” donation to a $150 “graduate” gift. CHC staff have already donated more than $5,000 to the fund.

More than 60 percent of UMass Amherst students qualify for need-based aid. The university has significantly increased the amount of financial aid available to students, but the price of an excellent college education remains a financial burden for some CHC students and their families.

“First semester freshman year I received a notice stating I had less than a week to pay thousands of dollars or I’d be sent home,” recalled one CHC student. 

“I have thought many times that I should stop going to college and start working so that I can help support my mom, brother and sister,” said another.

The new Community Scholarships support honors students who have financial need. The funds will provide up to four years of financial support for incoming CHC students, with preference given to those who are underrepresented on the UMass Amherst campus and to “first-generation” college students, that is, students whose parents have not earned a four-year college degree.

The dream of a college education becomes closer for all CHC students, regardless of background or socioeconomic status, with each dollar raised.