



Ministerial Statement

To The Senate

By

Senator Owen Darrell, JP

Junior Minister of Education

Bermuda College

2020 Annual Report, 2021 Audited Statements and 2021 Student Financial Support

Wednesday, December 1, 2021

Madam President,

This morning I rise before this Honourable House to lay the Bermuda College 2020-2021 Annual Report and its 2021 Audited Financial Statements, as required under Section 8 (2) of the Bermuda College Act 1974. I will also report on the Government's \$300,000 annual grant and the College Promise Merit Award programme, both of which are provided as financial support for students to attend Bermuda College.

Madam President,

One of the main functions of the Bermuda College Board of Governors is to deliver an annual report on the College activities and produce annual audited financial statements. I will report first on the Bermuda College Annual Report. The 2020-2021 Annual Report highlights the resilience demonstrated by faculty, staff, and students in ensuring that business operations, instruction, and learning proceeded with minimum disruption despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The annual report also shows the progress made by the Bermuda College in key areas of its five-year Strategic Plan, "*Vision 2023: Delivering Success*".

Madam President,

Some of the operational, academic, and technical activities undertaken by Bermuda College during the past year are as follows:

- A virtual site visit of the College was held with the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) accrediting agency. This site visit culminated in NECHE accepting the first 5-year Interim Report produced by Bermuda College;

- More than \$6 million was raised for capital projects and student financial assistance by the Bermuda College Foundation and its donors.
- The building commenced for a state-of-the-art Career Development Centre, renovation of one of its lecture theatres, and upgrading of its IT infrastructure as a result of a generous gift of \$3.8 million from Athene, Athene Life Re, Athora Holdings, Aspen Insurance Holdings and Catalina Insurance Holdings;
- There was an increased enrolment of 6% in the academic divisions during a challenging period when comparable institutions grappled with enrolment. Additionally, PACE serviced 1,181 students compared to 857 the previous year, an increase of 37%.
- During this past year, the College graduated 139 students, including 32 in January 2021, when it held its first Winter Commencement in over a decade. 15 graduates of the Mount Saint Vincent University programme represented the largest cohort in 10 years.
- In December 2020, 296 students earned international qualifications and workforce development certificates via the Division of Professional and Career Education (PACE); 109 public high school students earned their City and Guild Entry Level Introductory Award in Employability Skills, and 16 students earned the Certificate for Nursing Assistants (CNA);

Madam President,

Bermuda College has expanded its online programme offerings with signed articulation or transfer agreements with overseas institutions such as:

- Southern New Hampshire University, offering a BA in Psychology or General Studies and a BS in Business Administration or Technical Management;
- East Carolina University in the area of Coastal and Marine Science; Walden University for studies in nursing from an RN to BSN programme; and,
- Framingham State University, where the first cohort of 13 students has commenced the Graduate Programme in Educational Leadership.

Madam President,

The College also partnered with the Association of Bermuda Insurers and Reinsurers (ABIR) and St. John's University in New York to develop a talent pipeline for Bermudians to enter the insurance/reinsurance industry. The Division of Professional and Career Education (PACE) recorded its first qualified Associate Chartered Certificated Accountant (ACCA) graduate since the programme's inception in 2011. The PACE Division also achieved a commendable 25th ranking out of 200 community colleges in the Learning Resources Network (LERN), having registered over 90 students for online professional certificate courses during the year.

Madam President,

Student success undergirds all instructional strategies and initiatives at the College, and the following highlights are examples of student success. A partnership with Northampton University and the Bermuda Hospital Board led to three nursing graduates from Northampton University's Bachelors of Mental Health Programme, of which two received excellence awards. In Computer Information Systems, a second-year student took part in the Technology Leadership Forum, a government-sponsored internship involving multiple companies. Two students also took advantage of summer internships with @Company, a Silicon Valley tech start-up.

Madam President,

Two Earth and Environmental Studies students participated in a 6-week long weekend programme for Marine Science scholars at the Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences (BIOS). The programme aimed to reach students who could benefit from field and laboratory experience at BIOS. One student is now enrolled in the Marine Science Programme at Bermuda College; the other is attending the University of Plymouth to study Ocean Exploration and Surveying.

Madam President,

I will now shift to the fiduciary responsibility of the Bermuda College Board of Governors. I am pleased to report that the 2021 audited financial statements for Bermuda College were unqualified. As such, in the opinion of the Auditor General, the statements present fairly the financial position of Bermuda College at the end of the fiscal year 2021. The audited financial statements indicate that Bermuda College had assets worth **\$22,642,466** and total liabilities of **\$17,326,538**.

Additionally, **Madam President,** it should be noted that Bermuda College currently has no long-term debt. Cash and cash equivalents for the period increased by **22.7%** to **\$3,807,943**. The accounts receivable increased by **6.7%** to **\$1,133,591**, and the account payable decreased by **2.2%** and stood at **\$2,892,951** at the end of the 2021 fiscal year.

Madam President,

Although there have been capital investments at the College with the building of the Career Development Centre and upgrades to the IT infrastructure, this did not occur before March 31, 2021. As such, the capital assets reflected a depreciation as of March 31 and totalled \$14,909,119. However, with the establishment of the Bermuda College Foundation, it is expected that there will be ongoing capital investments in the infrastructure.

Madam President,

The Government grant to the Bermuda College remained at \$15,906,000 during the 2020/21 fiscal period while other revenue decreased by \$577,704 or 2.6%. However, total expenses also decreased by 9.2% resulting in excess revenue of \$1,016,304 for the year.

Madam President,

The Bermuda College financial officers and the Office of the Auditor General have been working assiduously during the past year to ensure that Bermuda College complies with the financial standards of its accreditors NECHE and the Bermuda College Act. This goal has been achieved since the College submitted both its 2020-2021 audited financial statements and its 2020-2021 Annual Report by September 30, 2021. As of today, both documents have been presented to this Honourable House.

Madam President,

I extend thanks to the Auditor General, Ms Heather Thomas, and her team in the Office of the Auditor-General for their efforts in bringing Bermuda College up to date with its audits. Additionally, thanks are given to Mr Dwight Furbert, VP Finance & Operations, and his team at the College.

Madam President,

I will now report on the annual Government Tuition Grant of **\$300,000** given to Bermuda College for financial support to students and share information on the College Promise' Merit Award' programme.

Madam President,

Let me speak first to the annual grant of **\$300,000**. My Honourable colleagues will recall that since September 2017, Bermuda College has been receiving an additional **\$300,000** specifically to support students in financial need. The purpose of the grant is to provide financial assistance to students in one of the three academic divisions or the Professional and Career Education (PACE) division at the College. To qualify for the funding, students must demonstrate a financial need, and current students must have a grade point average (GPA) of 2.00 or higher. The tuition awards range from **30%** to **100%** of a student's educational costs, with the educational costs defined as the value of tuition plus fees.

Madam President,

This semester 78 students received financial assistance from the tuition grant totalling **\$141,855**. Twenty-five students were enrolled in the Mount Saint Vincent University Business of Administration degree programme; 23 were enrolled in business and finance programmes; 15 were enrolled in health programmes, and 15 in-service programmes.

Madam President,

Allow me to point out that since this tuition grant was instituted in 2017, a total of 174 students have graduated or earned a certificate.

- 99 students have graduated with an associate degree, diploma or certificate from the academic divisions,
- 40 students earned a workforce development certificate from PACE,
- 29 students earned their Bachelor's degree from Mount St. Vincent University,
- 2 students earned a Master's degree from Miami University and
- 4 students have earned their Post Graduate Teaching Diploma from the University of West Indies.

Our students are experiencing success from this tuition grant, which we expect will trickle down into the economy as they pursue jobs in their respective fields of study.

Madam President,

On the other hand, the "**College Promise**" merit award programme was introduced in 2019 specifically for public high school students. This programme allows qualifying public school students to attend Bermuda College tuition-free immediately after their high school graduation. This is the third year of the programme, and I am pleased to share with my Honourable colleagues that since its inception in 2019, 4 students have graduated from Bermuda College. Currently, 65 students are participating in the College Promise programme at the Bermuda College this year, of which 33 are new College Promise student entrants, and 32 are returning students.

Madam President, this Government remains committed to supporting our Bermudian students. They are taking the opportunity to pursue tertiary education and doing well in their pursuits. The Government will continue to provide funding to ensure that no student is denied a Bermuda College education due to a lack of finances.

Madam President, in closing, I want to commend the Board Chair and members, faculty, staff and administration at Bermuda College for their continued commitment to the operations and delivery of tertiary education at the College during these unprecedented times. I invite this Honorable House to read the annual report for details of Bermuda College's accomplishments and successes for the 2020-2021 reporting period. Lastly, I encourage the general public to take advantage of the various courses and programmes offered at Bermuda College – where there are many paths, discover yours!

Thank you, Madam President,