



**Ministerial Statement**

To The House of Assembly

By

**The Hon. DIALLO V. RABAIN, MP, JP**

Minister of Education and Workforce Development

**Financial Support for Bermuda College Students**

**Friday, September 29<sup>th</sup> 2017**

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**Mr. Speaker,**

This morning I rise before this Honourable House to provide an update on the recent grant that was awarded to Bermuda College for offering financial support to its students.

**Mr. Speaker,**

Let me first remind my Honourable colleagues that the PLP Government made a promise to the people of Bermuda that during its first 100 days in office, we would “*provide financial support to students in need, to ensure access to Bermuda College for all Bermudians*”. **Mr. Speaker**, I am most pleased to share with my Honourable colleagues that on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017, this Government fulfilled the promise and announced that a grant in the amount of \$300,000 would be issued to Bermuda College to provide financial support to students. The funding for this grant was not additional monies allocated to the Ministry of Education and Workforce Development, but rather a reallocation of funds within the Ministry.

**Mr. Speaker,**

The \$300,000 Grant was to be used to financially assist students enrolled in three categories of study at the Bermuda College:

- i) Non-programme and programme academic division courses;
- ii) Professional and Career Education (PACE) programmes. This is a new benefit for potential students. Currently, the Bermuda College does not provide funding for students enrolled in the Division of Professional and Career Education (PACE); and,
- iii) Bachelor degree programmes offered through the Bermuda College.

**Mr. Speaker,**

As a result of this grant, Bermuda College received one hundred and ninety-seven (197) applications during the nine-day period between the press conference to announce the grant and the application deadline date. Of the one hundred and ninety-seven (197) applicants, one hundred and thirty-one (131) requested financial support to enroll in courses offered by the academic divisions, and sixty-six (66) requested funding to enroll in courses administered by the Professional and Career Education (PACE) Division. Of the PACE applications, eighteen (18) students were seeking funding for the Bachelor Degree programme offered by Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU) through Bermuda College.

**Mr. Speaker,**

The financial awards granted ranged from 30% to 80% of a student's educational costs, with the educational costs defined as the value of tuition plus fees. Students were required to complete an application form in addition to a financial worksheet to demonstrate financial need. Also current students needed to have a grade point average (GPA) of 2.00 or higher.

**Mr. Speaker,**

The main criteria in determining financial need was a comparison between the applicant's annual household income and the median household income of \$102,024 as reported in the 2013 Household Expenditure Survey Report, which is the latest available produced by the Department of Statistics. However, other factors considered were:

- The number of persons supported by the household income;
- The monthly balance of income and expenses as demonstrated by the financial worksheet;
- Educational costs funded by the household income such as child care, other dependents at Bermuda College or overseas; and,
- Any extensive debt owed such as medical bills, credit associations, etc.

**Mr. Speaker,**

Let me first share the distribution of funding for persons enrolled in the Academic Divisions. Eighty-six (86) individuals who applied for funding through the academic

divisions received funding. An additional forty (40) recipients who had already received the maximum available funding from Bermuda College's financial aid programme, were also granted financial support as a result of a needs assessment conducted during the Bermuda College Financial Aid process. Hence a total of one hundred and twenty-six (126) awards were granted to students enrolled in academic division courses. Of the one hundred and twenty-six (126), fifty-four (54) are new students to Bermuda College and seventy-two (72) are returning students. The total amount paid out to the 126 students enrolled in Academic Division courses was \$102,501.50. The minimum amount received by students was \$132, while the maximum amount a student received was \$1,760. On average, the amount received per student enrolled in the Academic Divisions was \$813.50.

**Mr. Speaker,**

Now I will turn to the funding awards for students enrolled in the Professional and Career Education Division of the Bermuda College, otherwise known as PACE. As a reminder to my Honourable colleagues, this is the first time, funding has been made available for students enrolled in the PACE department. **Mr. Speaker,** there were sixty-six (66) students who applied for courses offered by PACE, of which sixty-three (63) students received funding. Forty-six (46) students registered for the open enrolment courses while the remaining Seventeen (17) enrolled in the Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU) Bachelor of Business Administration degree programme.

**Mr. Speaker,**

As you are aware, the PACE Division of the Bermuda College serves the non-traditional students by offering both professional and workforce development training. This helps individuals achieve both professional and career goals in the work place. As a result of the funding provided, this Division received 56 new registrants of which the majority of students were unemployed, while the remainder were temporary, seasonal and part-time employees.

**Mr. Speaker,**

The total amount of funds provided to PACE students was \$91,212.53. Awards in the amount of \$43,869.60 went to the 46 open enrolment students; and \$47,342.93 to the 17 MSVU students. The minimum amount of financial support to the open enrolment students was \$235 while the maximum was \$2,312. On average, the

amount received per student was \$953.69. The MSVU students received between \$385 and \$5,444.42 with the average amount received totaling \$2,784.88.

**Mr. Speaker,**

Approximately, \$193,714.03 has been expensed to date from the \$300,000 grant to the Bermuda College, leaving a balance of \$106,285.97 which will be used to assist students with their tuition in the 2018 Spring semester.

**Mr. Speaker,**

As I close, let me share with this Honourable House one more statistic that is worth noting. Sixty-seven percent of students who received financial support to participate in the Academic Divisions, and, 98% of students supported in courses offered by the PACE Division, received the maximum financial award reflecting 80% of their total educational costs.

**Mr. Speaker,**

This stemmed from the fact that the student's annual household income was less than \$51,012 which represents 50% of the 2013 median household income in Bermuda, and which is also the widely used definition of 'poverty'. This is significant and highlights the need for the establishment of a living wage in Bermuda; and it underscores this Government's position to have a better and fairer Bermuda for Bermudians. As such, we will continue the provision of all available resources as needed, to ensure access to higher education at the Bermuda College for all Bermudians.

Thank you **Mr. Speaker**