

Parliament sets the record straight on bursaries for staff

Parliament on Sunday refuted the claims made in several media reports over the criteria used to allocate bursaries.



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“In 2016 Parliament invited staff members to apply for bursaries to study for this year through its allocated bursary budget of R1.5 million. This has been the case annually.

“Out of a total of 155 funding requests received totalling R5.6 million, which far exceeded the available R1.5 million bursary budget, only 50 applications could be approved,” said Parliamentary spokesperson Manelisi Wolela.

Wolela said that in order to ensure fairness and equal opportunity for all staff members, preference was given to new applicants who have not previously benefited from the bursary fund.

Parliament refuted media reports that an employee was sent to Columbia University at a cost of R1.1 million.

“When Ms Mtya was employed by Parliament in 2016 following a lengthy search for a suitably qualified person to fill the CIO position, she had already been accepted at the said university and her studies were to be sponsored under her previous employer’s employee bursary fund,” said Wolela.

Since Parliament has a similar scheme for its employees, one of the mutually agreed terms and conditions pertaining to her employment was that she would, like any employee of Parliament, benefit from the institution’s bursary fund.

The circumstances around the Secretary of Parliament Gengezi Mgidlana’s bursary are not entirely different to that of Mtya in that when Parliament engaged him in 2014, he was already pursuing his MBL at Unisa under a bursary funded by his previous employer.

“With the exception of both Ms Mtya and Mr Mgidlana, whose unique circumstances have already been thoroughly explained, the rest of the bursary beneficiaries this year are junior managers and ordinary staff. Essentially, this means over 96% of Parliament bursary fund are ordinary staff.”

Parliament said the criteria for allocating bursaries to staff is fair, transparent and non-discriminatory.

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