

**Commission on Faculty Affairs
Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies
Commission on Research**

**RESOLUTION TO FORM A UNIVERSITY MISSION INITIATIVE COMMITTEE TO
RECOMMEND UPDATED POLICIES FOR FUNDING DOCTORAL RESEARCH AT
VIRGINIA TECH**

UC 2024-25A

First Reading by Commission on Faculty Affairs	October 18, 2024
Approval by Commission on Faculty Affairs	November 1, 2024
First Reading by Faculty Senate	October 25, 2024
Approval by Faculty Senate	November 8, 2024
Staff Senate Comment	November 11, 2024
Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate Comment	October 30, 2024
Graduate and Professional Student Senate Comment	October 27, 2024
Undergraduate Student Senate Comment	None Received
First Reading, University Council	December 2, 2024
Approved, University Council	February 3, 2025
Approved, President	Date
Effective Date	Upon Approval

WHEREAS, engagement in research is a core element of the tripartite mission of Virginia Tech; and

WHEREAS, in the pursuit of global distinction, an opportunity exists to elevate and transform the operations at the university to increase graduate student enrollment and research training;

WHEREAS, this transformation can be supported through investigating changes to funding policies related to graduate students; studying how faculty allocate extramural funding to graduate trainees; and establishing a new vision for the role that research plays in the training of graduate students; and

WHEREAS, policies must be examined and funding strategies need to be developed to ensure continued financial support for current graduate students and increased to provide for increased enrollment; and

WHEREAS, faculty and graduate students have unique and essential roles in conducting research and disseminating its outcomes as part of doctoral training; and

WHEREAS, the quality of research conducted at the university is central to future success in all domains of activity in which faculty and graduate students participate and in the future careers of graduate trainees; and

WHEREAS, the University Council Constitution, Article II, defines that the goals of the university include “provid[ing] an environment conducive to the pursuit of learning, teaching, scholarship, research, and service;”

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that under the provisions of the University Council Constitution, Article XII and its associated bylaws, the Provost and the Faculty Senate President shall sponsor, in accordance with the Guidelines for the Creation of Work Groups, Task Forces, and other ad hoc Committees,¹ and with the advice of all constituent groups, a University Mission Initiative Committee tasked with developing recommendations to enhance the research enterprise of the university via increased doctoral student training through revisions to policies and practices associated with funding graduate trainee research activities. The University Council Cabinet and the co-sponsors shall choose the chair of the Committee, outline the charge of the Committee, and empanel its members according to the University Council Bylaws; and

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in formulating the Committee’s charge, the University Council Cabinet and the co-sponsors should consider a broad goal of increasing enrollment of doctoral students, and related topics including revisions to policies and procedures to encourage expanding the number of graduate research assistantships; studying the use of teaching assistantships; supporting fellowship applications by graduate students; assessing use of extramural funding attained by faculty, particularly in the balance between training graduate students and postdoctoral associates and employing other research faculty; the potential need for hiring additional instructional faculty to reduce graduate student teaching demands and account for increased enrollment; and any other such topics that it deems relevant to its charge. Specific recommendations related to financial impacts to the university will be central to the report produced by the University Mission Initiative Committee. The chair of the University Mission Initiative Committee shall submit budget projections related to graduate student compensation, graduate candidacy status, and extramural funding levels that are relevant to the FY2026 budget to the University Council Cabinet by the conclusion of the spring semester of 2025, and additional policy recommendations by the conclusion of the fall semester of 2025.

¹ <https://policies.vt.edu/assets/Guidelines-for-Creation-of-Work-Groups-and-Other-ad-hoc-Committees.pdf>