

# MINUTES

## COMMISSION ON STUDENT AFFAIRS

Thursday, February 17 @ 3:30pm  
Graduate Life Center – Meeting Room F

**Present:** Ainsley Cragin, Anthony Tran (for Prince Wang), Ariana Guevara, Ashlyn Top, Caroline Lohr, Danielle Panico, Jack Leff, James Bridgeforth (for Frank Shushok), Kit Friedman, Lauren Surface, Mohamed Hussein (for Noor Hunt), Monica Hunter (for Kimberly Smith), Monica Nguyen, Morgan Salvato, Paolo Fermin, Sarah Munford (for Sidney Stearns), Susanna Rinehart, Terri Pecora

**Absent with Notice:** Jen Pike, Kamla Al Amri, Tamara Cherry-Clarke

**Absent:** Alice Fox, Amanda Coleman, Benjamin Janosy, Ege Onar, Ennis McCreery, Graham Anderson-Johnson, Justin Ratcliffe, Michael Chin, Phil Miskovic, Senija Davis

**Guests:** Heather Wagoner, Jimmy Haegerty, Juwan Jacobs

Dr. Heather Wagoner reiterated that CSA meetings occur once a month, and are scheduled to begin promptly at 3:30pm. She reminded members they need to arrive and be ready to go, no later than 3:30pm. She also asked members if they had friends who hold seats on CSA to remind them it is a privilege, and an honor, to represent the student voice and the decrease in attendance is simply unacceptable.

Ariana Guevara called the meeting to order at 3:55pm. A quorum was present.

Before presenting the agenda for adoption, Ariana addressed a couple of changes that were made to the agenda; i.e. the two CSA resolutions A & B being removed. She stated if there were any comments, or concerns about the removal of these two agenda items, to please see her after the meeting to discuss; or to send an email to her, Heather, or Dr. Bridgeforth with any concerns.

After a lengthy discussion, Jack Leff makes a motion for the two GPSS resolutions be added back to the agenda. It is seconded. The floor is then opened up for discussion, and Jack states he strongly encourages members to vote yes, to keep these on the initial agenda. After further, ongoing discussion Jack reiterates the motion on the floor is to introduce them back to the agenda for a first reading today. The motion is once again seconded.

After even more discussion, Jack withdraws his original motion to have the two resolutions that were initially removed - added back to the agenda today. Jack then entertains another motion for them to officially be added to the March 17<sup>th</sup> agenda for a first reading. The motion is seconded. A vote was taken on the motion, and the motion passed.

### 1) Attendance

### 2) Adoption of Agenda

- A motion was made, and seconded, to adopt the agenda. The motion carried.

### 3) Announcement of Approval and Posting of Minutes for January 27, 2022

- Ariana noted that these minutes have been voted on electronically, and can be publicly accessed on the Governance Information System on the Web (<http://www.governance.vt.edu>).

### 4) Leadership Lesson with Susanna

- This item is being moved to the March 17, 2022 meeting

## 5) University Council Update

- a. University Council Update
  - University Council met on Monday, February 7, 2022, and over 500 people attended via Zoom. The following two Resolutions had their first reading:
    - Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies Resolution CGPSP 2021-22D Resolution to Institute a Living Wage for Graduate Students
    - Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies Resolution CGPSP 2021-22E Resolution to Change the GPSS Constitution to Move Transition of Leadership to Spring

The next meeting is Monday, February 21, at which time these resolutions will have the second reading. Minutes for UC will be accessible from the governance website: <https://governance.vt.edu/university-council.php> and information about the GPSS Resolutions can be accessed here: <https://gpss.vt.edu/>.

## 6) New Business

- a. CSA Resolution 2021-22E (former USS Resolution 2021-22.1) - (See attached.)  
Resolution for Approval of Undergraduate Student Senate Governing Documents

Jimmy Haegerty presented the resolution for the first reading. Jack Leff commented on behalf of the grad students, saying they are really excited to see the new USS, as they feel it is a step in the right direction. He went on to say they feel it is a good start to addressing the ongoing equity issues. He closed by saying GPSS is really proud of the current USS representation. No additional discussion was had, and no questions were raised.

Ariana stated if anyone had any questions that come up after the meeting, they would like answered, to send her ([ariana@vt.edu](mailto:ariana@vt.edu)) or Caroline ([caroline710@vt.edu](mailto:caroline710@vt.edu)) an email. This also includes questions or comments pertaining to the USS Bylaws or the USS Constitution.

- b. CSA Resolution 2021-22D (former GPSS Resolution 2021-22V) - (See attached.)  
Resolution for Secure Equitable Funding for Cook Counseling

Jack Leff presented the resolution for discussion. To summarize, GPSS is asking for:

- Stronger funding for Cook Counseling through the health fee; by recommending an investigation of increasing the student health fee
- More avenues for input to provide feedback on fees and fee rates

Jack shared they want a task force made up of undergrad and grad representatives, along with Cook Counseling and Budget Office representatives, etc. be formed and charged with offering more input into the overall fee structure; thus, allowing Cook to offer more mental health services and resources.

The other charge of the task force would be to investigate different ways for them to have more direct input as to the fees. Jack stated if this is voted forward, it will not increase student fees, but would charge a task force to help make better recommendations to which both graduate and undergraduate students are represented.

Discussion was had, and CSA made the following recommendations:

- The resolution to include specific data/stats to support and strengthen the resolution
- Have someone from Cook present to offer insight and answer questions
- Create a survey to gather students opinions and input
- Discuss further at a future Town Hall Meeting

- c. CSA Resolution 2021-22C (former GPSS Resolution 2021-22U) - (See attached.)  
Resolution to Make Student Services More Readily Available for Graduate Students During the Semester and Summer

Jack Leff presented the resolution for discussion. He stated that typically Grad Students live here year-round, yet are only paid for 9 months out of a year; ultimately needing access to services but at times having to pay for them out of pocket. Similar to the prior resolution, GPSS is asking for:

- An investigation be conducted in hopes of health services being made readily available to them 12 months out of the year as part of the funding.
- More avenues for input to provide feedback on fees and fee rates

Jack stated the same “Task Force” as mentioned above, could ultimately be tasked with addressing all of the issues from both GPSS resolutions.

Susanna Rinehart brings attention to having two different resolutions essentially asking for task forces to be created. She posed the question of the necessity of a resolution to create a task force on an issue vs. an existing body that has a concern to raise to the institution, and thus seeks communication with those parts of the institution.

She then pointed out that: (1) creating a resolution to create a task force; as opposed to (2) we would like to invite those members of the administration of the university who oversee these policies to have a conversation to raise questions, to ask for things directly, - seemed to be a more functional way to operate than this current process. Susanna closed with that it seemed to her, in both instances, that conversations, and collaborations that need to happen, are waiting on a resolution to create a task force.

Jack stated that they were introduced by the Graduate and Professional Student Senate because they do not currently have any other formal options. In addition, he shared they had previously asked for discussions with university administration – yet they were given the run around, and therefore, they are in need of more political buy in. Jack went onto say that he was good with a more advocacy-based approach; as tasks forces do not need a resolution, they just need an administrator.

Jack makes a motion to defer ongoing discussion for CSA Resolutions D & C. A new motion is made for both of the resolutions to be added to the March 17<sup>th</sup> agenda for an official first reading. The motion is seconded. A vote was taken on the motion, and the motion passed.

## 7) Other

Ariana closes the meeting with the following announcements:

- Members were reminded to read over CSA Resolutions A & B that were not discussed during the meeting today, and to come fully prepared to discuss and ask questions at the next meeting
- The following business will take place at our March 17 meeting:
  - Official first reading of GPSS, now CSA Resolutions, 2021-22A, B, C, & D
  - Second reading of USS, now CSA Resolution 2021-2022E
- Presidential memorandum will be forthcoming by email to all members for review
- Erica will be sending PDF copies of all five CSA resolutions again to members for review
- Members were reminded of the importance of taking their role on CSA seriously; to be in attendance at the meetings; and the importance of being on time

## 8) Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made; seconded; all were in favor; the meeting adjourned at 4:58pm.

Next Meeting: Thursday, March 17, 2022 @ 3:30pm - **\*\*Update to Location\*\* GLC Meeting Room B**

**Commission on Student Affairs  
CSA Resolution 2021-22E**

**Resolution for Approval of Undergraduate Student Senate Governing Documents**

First Reading by Undergraduate Student Senate:	Feb 8, 2022
Approved by Undergraduate Student Senate:	Feb 15, 2022
First Reading by Commission on Student Affairs:	Feb 17, 2022
Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate Review:	Date
Faculty Senate Review:	Date
Graduate and Professional Student Senate Review:	Date
Staff Senate Review:	Date
Undergraduate Student Senate Review:	Date
Approved by Commission on Student Affairs:	TBD
First Reading by University Council:	Date
Approved by, University Council:	Date
Approval by University President:	Date
Approved, Board of Visitors: (if needed)	Date
Effective Date:	Date

**WHEREAS**, the Undergraduate Student Senate (USS) is a newly established student governance entity; and

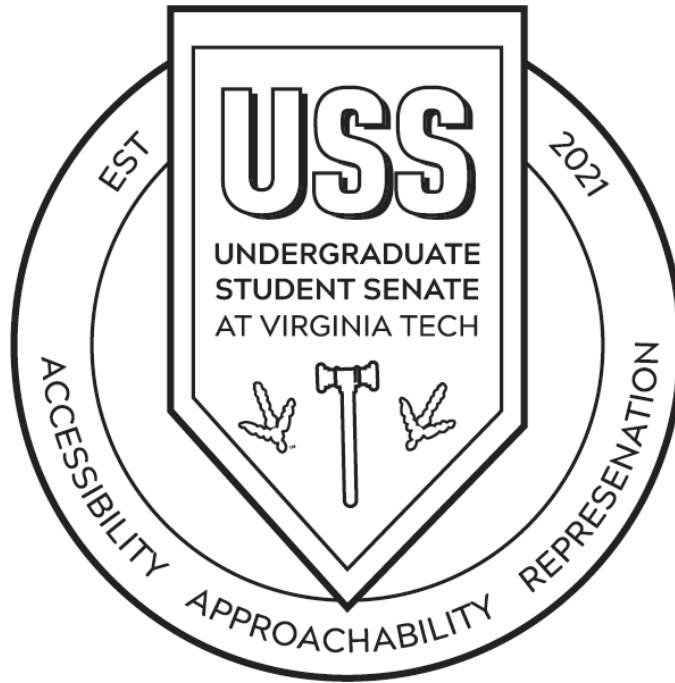
**WHEREAS**, the USS is part of the five senate structure at Virginia Tech; and

**WHEREAS**, all senates are required to have a constitution and a set of bylaws that are consistent with the University Council constitution, in order to best function, conduct best processes, and serve their constituents; and

**WHEREAS**, the USS Constitution and Bylaws were authored by the USS Transition Team and reviewed by members of the Virginia Tech administration and the current USS Cabinet; and

**WHEREAS**, the USS Constitution and Bylaws are required and necessary for best function of the USS; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the USS approves and adopts the attached Constitution and Bylaws, effective upon approval from the Board of Visitors.



*The Undergraduate Student Senate Bylaws  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University*

Authored: USS Transition Team, 2021  
Adopted: University Council of Virginia Tech, 2021  
Amended: *November 2021*



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## **Article I: Meetings of the Undergraduate Student Senate**

1. Regular meetings for the full Undergraduate Student Senate shall be on the first and third Tuesdays of each month from the opening of the Fall Semester until the end of the academic year in May.
2. Regular committee meetings may be held on the second or fourth Tuesday or if needed the committee may choose to meet at a different time if there is a class conflict.

## **Article II: The Spirit of Ut Prosim**

The members of the Undergraduate Student Senate believe that our commitment to *Ut Prosim* (That I may serve) is the defining characteristic of Virginia Tech and that all gatherings of this body should be infused with the spirit of *Ut Prosim*. To give voice to these beliefs, the president will begin and end each meeting with the call, “*Ut Prosim*,” to which the body shall respond in unison, “That I may serve”. This public display of fidelity to the principle of *Ut Prosim* will remind senators of the USS that we are in positions of leadership to serve our beloved institution and our fellow undergraduate students.

## **Article III: Definitions**

- a. Information Session**—this term refers to a 45 minute meeting held before elections begin to share information with potential candidates about the USS, positions, processes, etc.
- b. USS Member**—this term encompasses **President, Vice Presidents, and Senators.**

## **Article IV: Cabinet**

Representatives of the USS Cabinet will be chosen through an election process as outlined in Article VII, Section 5 of the USS Constitution.

### **Section 1: President**

#### *a. Eligibility*

The president must:

- i. Be enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student at the university and be in good standing academically and with the Honor System and Student Conduct at the time of application and throughout the entire term.
- ii. Complete an interview with the Advisory Committee appointed by the Senior Advisor.
- iii. Remain actively engaged in senate meetings, activities, and committee meetings.
- iv. Be able to demonstrate a clear and enthusiastic commitment to servant leadership
- v. Attend an information session or one-on-one meeting with the Senior Advisor (or designee) for the Undergraduate Student Senate.

*b. Duties and Responsibilities*

The president will:

- i. Lead the USS with integrity and in a manner that demonstrate *UT Prosim* and the *Ten Characteristics of Servant Leadership* at all times.
- ii. Convene and preside over all senate meetings.
- iii. Attend every senate retreat.
- iv. Report to the Senior Advisor on a regular basis and meet with the Senior Advisor every other week.
- v. Engage with the administration and other shared governance leaders as the chief representative for the undergraduate student.
- vi. Fulfill the legislative responsibilities as stated in the Article IX of the bylaws.
- vii. Meet regularly with vice presidents, both individually and collectively, to ensure effective and efficient functioning of the senate.
- viii. Meet with various student organizations and students as needed.
- ix. Hold a minimum of five office hours per week.
- x. Create ad-hoc committees as needed and notify the senate of committee creation at the following senate meeting.
- xi. Provide bi-weekly communications and updates to the student body via the VT Student News.
- xii. Fulfill additional requirements as requested by university officials.
- xiii. Serve on university committees.
- xiv. In coordination with the Senior Advisor, appoint senators to serve on university committees, commissions, and task forces, etc.
- xv. Be available over the summer for administrative duties as needed.
- xvi. Call the senate into special session when necessary.

## Section 2: Vice President for Issues and Policy

### a. Eligibility

The Vice President for Issues and Policy must:

- i. Be enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student at the University and be in good standing academically and with the Honor System and Student Conduct at the time of application and through the entire term.
- ii. Optional but strongly encouraged: Attend an information session OR one-on-one meeting with the Senior Advisor (or designee) for the Undergraduate Student Senate.
- iii. Must complete an interview with the Advisory Committee appointed by the Senior Advisor.
- iv. Must remain actively engaged in Senate meeting, activities, and leadership; must be actively involve regular meetings of the full Senate and committee meetings as expected.
- v. Enthusiastic commitment (to) and clear demonstration of servant leadership is required

### b. Duties and Responsibilities:

The Vice President for Issues and Policy will:

- i. Demonstrate *Ut Prosim* and the *Ten Characteristics of Servant Leadership* at all times.
- ii. Oversee Issues and Policy Committee(s)
- iii. Meet with the Senior Advisor for the Undergraduate Student Senate monthly as needed.
- iv. Read, edit, and facilitate legislation as it pertains to the student body's well-being and overall improvement of the student experience
- v. Serve as a champion for the student experience at Virginia Tech
- vi. If necessary, may veto legislation with other Cabinet Representatives as stated in the Bylaws Article X, Section 4
- vii. Responsible for reviewing legislation to ensure it aligns with governing documents before it comes to the Senate
- viii. Serve as the Senate parliamentarian during USS meetings

- ix. Attend all Senate meetings and retreats
- x. Reports to the USS President
- xi. Hold a minimum of five office hours per week

### **Section 3: Vice President for Shared Governance**

#### *a. Eligibility*

The Vice President for Shared Governance must:

- i. Be enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student at the University and be in good standing academically and with the Honor System and Student Conduct at the time of application and through the entire term.
- ii. Optional but strongly encouraged: Attend an information session OR one-on-one meeting with the Senior Advisor (or designee) for the Undergraduate Student Senate.
- iii. Must complete an interview with the Advisory Committee appointed by the Senior Advisor.
- iv. Must remain actively engaged in Senate meetings, activities, and leadership; must be actively involved in regular meetings of the full Senate and committee meetings as expected.
- v. Currently or previously had participated as a member of a University Chartered Student Organization (USCO).
- vi. The enthusiastic commitment (to) and clear demonstration of servant leadership is required

#### *b. Duties and Responsibilities:*

The Vice President for Shared Governance will:

- i. Serves as the Chair of the Commission for Undergraduate Student Affairs
- ii. Report to the Senate with all governing information following each committee meeting
- iii. Champion, support or veto legislation with other Cabinet Representatives as stated in the Bylaws Article X, Section 4
- iv. Serve as a champion for the student experience at Virginia Tech
- v. Be available over the summer for administrative duties and responsibilities as needed.

- vi. Attend every Senate meeting and retreat
- vii. Reports to the USS President
- viii. Hold a minimum of five office hours per week

#### **Section 4: Vice President for Equity and Inclusion**

*a. Eligibility:*

The Vice President for Equity and Inclusion must:

- i. Be enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student at the University and be in good standing academically and with the Honor System and Student Conduct at the time of application and through the entire term.
- ii. Optional but strongly encouraged: Attend an information session OR one-on-one meeting with the Senior Advisor (or designee) for the Undergraduate Student Senate.
- iii. Must complete an interview with the Advisory Committee appointed by the Senior Advisor.
- iv. Must remain actively engaged in Senate meetings, activities, and leadership; must be actively involved in regular meetings of the full Senate and committee meetings as expected.
- v. The enthusiastic commitment (to) and clear demonstration of servant leadership is required

*b. Duties and Responsibilities:*

The Vice President for Equity and Inclusion will:

- i. Oversee the Director of Government Relations
- ii. Partner with the USS President and UCSOs to write executive letters to the student body on matters pertaining to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility
- iii. Listen and hear the opinions and recommendations of UCSO senators and those of the student body as it pertains to Equity and Inclusion
- iv. Meet with the University Vice President for Diversity, Equity, & Strategic Affairs on a monthly or more frequent basis
- v. Work in tandem with the Vice President for Issues and Policy when editing and reviewing legislation as it pertains to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility

- vi. Work with Vice President for Administration to create a sense of accountability and hold trainings as it pertains to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility
- vii. Champion, support, or veto legislation with other Cabinet Representatives as stated in the Bylaws Article X Section 4
- viii. Be available over the summer for administrative duties and responsibilities as needed.
- ix. Attend every Senate meeting and retreat
- x. Attend a monthly meeting with the Senior Advisor to the Undergraduate Student Senate
- xi. Reports to the USS President
- xii. Hold a minimum of five office hours per week

### **Section 5: Vice President for Administration**

#### *a. Eligibility:*

The Vice President for Administration must:

- i. Be enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student at the University and be in good standing academically and with the Honor System and Student Conduct at the time of application and through the entire term.
- ii. Optional but strongly encouraged: Attend an information session OR one-on-one meeting with the Senior Advisor (or designee) for the Undergraduate Student Senate.
- iii. Must complete an interview with the Advisory Committee appointed by the Senior Advisor.
- iv. Must remain actively engaged in Senate meetings, activities, and leadership; must be actively involved in regular meetings of the full Senate and committee meetings as expected.
- v. The enthusiastic commitment (to) and clear demonstration of servant leadership is required

#### *b. Duties and Responsibilities:*

The Vice President for Administration will:

- i. Oversee the Administration committee

- ii. Oversee *Director of Special Programs, Director of Communications and Marketing, and Director of Membership Development* and their respective committees
- iii. Responsible for obtaining items for the agenda and finalizing with the Cabinet.
- iv. Consistently maintain multiple communication channels within the organization
- v. Responsible for the oversight of all internal communications (including meeting minutes) through the Administration Committee
- vi. Responsible for maintaining all legislative and other records for the institution and properly archiving them.
- vii. Champion, support, and veto legislation with other Cabinet Representatives as stated in the Bylaws Article X, Section 4
- viii. Reserves space for all meetings
- ix. Be available over the summer for administrative duties and responsibilities.
- x. Attend every Senate meeting and retreat
- xi. Attend a monthly meeting with the Senior Advisor to the Undergraduate Student Senate
- xii. Reports to the USS President
- xiii. Hold a minimum of five office hours per week

## **Section 6: Vice President for Finance**

### *a. Eligibility*

The Vice President for Finance must:

- i. Be enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student at the University and be in good standing academically and with the Honor System and Student Conduct at the time of application and through the entire term
- ii. Optional but strongly encouraged: Attend an information session OR one-on-one meeting with the Senior Advisor (or designee) for the Undergraduate Student Senate.
- iii. Must complete an interview with the Advisory Committee appointed by the Senior Advisor.
- iv. Must remain actively engaged in Senate meetings, activities, and leadership; must be actively involved in regular meetings of the full Senate and committee meetings as expected.
- v. The enthusiastic commitment (to) and clear demonstration of servant leadership is required

*b. Duties and Responsibilities*

The Vice President for Finance will:

- i. Oversee and serve as Chair of the Appropriations Committee
- ii. Oversee the Director of Hokie Effect
- iii. Serve as a member of the Student Finance Leadership Committee
- iv. Share financial updates at each Senate meeting
- v. Prepare and provide monthly, annual or as needed financial reports
- vi. Champion, support and veto legislation with other Cabinet Representatives as stated in the Bylaws Article X, Section 4
- vii. Reports to the President
- viii. Be available over the summer for administrative duties and responsibilities as needed.
- ix. Attend every Senate meeting and retreat
- x. Attend a monthly meeting with the Senior Advisor to the Undergraduate Student Senate
- xi. Reports to the USS President
- xii. Hold a minimum of five office hours per week

**Section 7: Vice President and Representative to the Board of Visitors (BOV)**

*a. Eligibility:*

- i. This Vice President is “appointed” by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors

*b. Duties and Responsibilities:*

The Vice President and Representative for the BOV must:

- i. Complete duties as outlined by the Board of Visitors
- ii. Serve as the undergraduate representative to the University Board of Visitors (BOV)
- iii. Streamline the work and elevate issues of concern on behalf of the student body to the BOV
- iv. Share the undergraduate student experience with the BOV for better understanding and clarity
- v. Conduct regular focus groups with students to hear student experiences
- vi. Work closely with other Vice Presidents and the President to ensure seamless and strong functionality of the organization



- vii. Meets regularly with the Vice President of Policy and Governance
- viii. Champion, support, and veto legislation with other Cabinet Representatives as stated in the Bylaws Article X, Section 4
- ix. Attend a monthly meeting with the Senior Advisor to the Undergraduate Student Senate
- x. Attends every Senate meeting and retreat
- xi. Reports to the Board of Visitors
- xii. Hold a minimum of five office hours per week

## **Article IV: Senators**

### **Section 1: Membership**

- a. Senators are undergraduate student representatives who advocate and work on behalf of their specified constituency.
- b. There are four types of senators defined in Article V of the constitution, each with a different constituency: at-large senators, college senators, University Chartered Student Organization (UCSO) Senators, and Corps of Cadets Senators.

### **Section 2: Eligibility**

Senators must be:

- a. Enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student at the university and in good standing academically and with the Honor System and Student Conduct at the time of application and throughout the entire term.
- b. Able to physically attend the Blacksburg campus for meetings and responsibilities.

### **Section 3: Duties and Responsibilities**

All senators will:

- a. Demonstrate *Ut Prosim* at all times.
- b. Understand, communicate, and represent the needs and concerns of their constituents in all senate discussions and legislative actions.
- c. Collaborate with other USS senators, administrators, and other participants in shared governance to improve the student experience.
- d. Engage as a voting representative in the USS.
- e. Attend every senate meeting and retreat.
- f. Hold a minimum of two (2) office hours per week.

## **Article V: Directors**

### **Section 1: Membership**

Directors are charged with overseeing and facilitating various aspects of student life activities, including the management of Hokie Effect, governmental relations, Membership Development, Communications and Marketing, and Special Programs within the USS.

### **Section 2: Eligibility**

Directors must be:

- a. Enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student at the University and in good standing academically and with the Honor System and Student Conduct at the time of application and through the entire term.
- b. Able to physically attend the Blacksburg campus for meetings and responsibilities.

### **Section 3: Term of Office**

Directors will be elected via the process found section 9 of this Article and will serve one (1) year terms.

### **Section 4: Director & Assistant Director of Hokie Effect**

- a. The duties and responsibilities of the director are to:
  - i. Provide oversight of the Hokie Effect program.
  - ii. Act as the main point of contact for campus and external partners.
  - iii. Chair of the Hokie Effect committee.
  - iv. Appoint and meet regularly with the Assistant Director of Hokie Effect.
  - v. Work closely with USS advisors to ensure consistent financial review.
  - vi. Report to the Vice President of Finance.
  - vii. Attend every senate meeting and retreat.
- b. The duties and responsibilities of the assistant director are to:

- i. Coordinate shirt(s) and design selection.
- ii. Coordinate the marketing and promotion of the Hokie Effect program.
- iii. Work closely with the Director of Hokie Effect to comprehensively support and deliver the program.
- iv. Oversee social media pages for Hokie Effect.
- v. Manage data collection and distribution to all partners.
- vi. Analyze and create reports about Hokie Effect engagement and sales.
- vii. Report to the Director of Hokie Effect.
- viii. Attend every senate meeting and retreat.

### **Section 5: Director & Assistant Director of Governmental Relations**

- a. The duties and responsibilities of the director are to:
  - i. Manage and implement Hokie Day.
  - ii. Meet regularly with the assistant director.
  - iii. Manage, collaborate on, and implement ACC Advocacy Day with other ACC leaders.
  - iv. Coordinate with SECL on precincts for voting.
  - v. Report to the Vice President of Equity and Inclusion.
  - vi. Attend every senate meeting and retreat.
  
- b. Duties and responsibilities of the assistant director are to:
  - i. Meet regularly with the director.
  - ii. Coordinate VA21 representation.
  - iii. Collaborate with VT Engage and other campus partners on voter engagement programs.
  - iv. Assist the director with execution of Hokie Day and ACC Advocacy Day.
  - v. Report to the Director of Governmental Relations.
  - vi. Attend every senate meeting and retreat.

### **Section 6: Director of Membership Development**

- a. The duties and responsibilities are to:
  - i. Oversee and meet regularly with Membership Development Committee.
  - ii. Create and maintain onboarding packets for each position.

- iii. Create opportunities for representatives to build leadership skills and competencies.
- iv. Organize advisor-approved USS retreats.
- v. Organize social events with USS representatives to foster unity and bonding at least once per semester.
- vi. Maintain a transition document for the benefit of new USS leadership upon the conclusion of senate each year and as required by the University Council Constitution.
- vii. Report to the Vice President of Administration.
- viii. Attend every senate meeting and retreat.

### **Section 7: Director of Special Programs**

- a. The duties and responsibilities of the director are to:
  - i. Oversee and meet regularly with the Special Programs Committee.
  - ii. Prepare and plan programs and events that tie specifically to the USS mission.
  - iii. Serve as a coordinator and resource for programs with senators.
  - iv. Partner with University Chartered Student Organizations (UCSO) on programs and events as needed.
  - v. Reserve space for all USS programs.
  - vi. Report to the Vice President of Administration.
  - vii. Attend every senate meeting and retreat.

### **Section 8: Director of Communications and Marketing**

- a. The duties and responsibilities of the director are to:
  - i. Manage and update all social media accounts.
  - ii. Create additional social media accounts with approval of the cabinet.
  - iii. Chair and meet regularly with the Communications and Marketing Committee.
  - iv. Create an annual marketing plan and implement the plan with appropriate USS committees.
  - v. Work closely with the Assistant Director of Hokie Effect to ensure consistent alignment of marketing and social media for Hokie Effect.
  - vi. Create and execute brand guidelines for the USS that align with Virginia Tech guidelines.
  - vii. Report to the Vice President for Administration.
  - viii. Attend every senate meeting and retreat.

### **Section 9: Election of Directors**

The Undergraduate Student Senate will open a call for applicants to fill vacant director and assistant director positions at the start of each senate term. Details regarding that selection process will be outlined in the application process. All undergraduate students who are enrolled full-time at the university may apply to any or all positions, as interested. The USS will facilitate election of directors and assistant directors via an interview selection committee and a vote by the full senate. Upon completion of this process, the USS will announce the new directors and assistant directors. Should a position become vacant, the same process will be applied in the selection of a new director or assistant director.

Students who serve as directors or assistant directors may only fill one position at a time. Students may relinquish their posts at any time by submitting a letter to the President of the Undergraduate Student Senate in advance of vacating their post.

## **Article VI: USS Committees**

All USS committees shall be chaired by either a vice-president or a director. Both Vice Presidents and/or Directors will chair the committee that bears the title most similar to their own and shall be elected as outlined in Article V, Section 9 of these bylaws. Committee members will be elected as part of the process outlined in Article VII, Section 5 of the constitution. In all cases, the number of committee members is subject to change based upon current enrollment data.

### **Section 1: Issues and Policy Committees**

- a. Each of the two (2) committees will consist of a maximum of nine (9) at-large senators, three (3) UCSO Senators, six (6) college senators, and one (1) Corps of Cadets Senator and any individuals required for advancement of legislation overseen by the Vice President for Issues and Policy.
- b. *Duties and responsibilities:*
  - i. These committees are expected to engage in ongoing dialogue with the student body and other members of the university to foster positive relationships that deliver innovative solutions and policies beneficial to the undergraduate student body and the university as a whole.
  - ii. Meet with constituents regularly.
  - iii. Meet with administrators across campus to understand various functions of the university so advocacy efforts align with student needs and current operations.

- iv. Intake concerns and opportunities for students and create a path forward towards advocacy and resolution.
- v. Write effective and efficient resolutions and legislation that is rooted in research, understanding, and the undergraduate student voice.

## **Section 2: Administration Committee**

- a. Consists of two (2) at-large senators, one (1) UCSO Senator, and three (3) college senators overseen by the Vice President for Administration.
- b. *Duties and responsibilities:*
  - i. Take attendance at meetings and manage notifications for attendance to representatives.
  - ii. Coordinate office hours for all representatives.
  - iii. Record meeting minutes during senate meetings.
  - iv. Distribute meeting minutes internally and on the website after approval by the senate.
  - v. Manage and implement all internal communication (meeting reminders, weekly emails, important updates).
  - vi. Organize, store, and track all documents (including legislation) for the USS.
  - vii. Maintain the USS office, including supply orders, work orders, and tenant relations with Student Engagement and Campus Life.
  - viii. Regularly check the USS email account and forward the information to the relevant people.
  - ix. Keep the USS website up to date, including but not limited to:
    - 1. Visual aids and images
    - 2. Meeting minutes
    - 3. Passed legislation
    - 4. Meeting information for the public.

## **Section 3: Communications and Marketing Committee**

- a. Consists of one (1) at-large senator, one (1) UCSO senator, and two (2) college senators led by the Director of Communications and overseen by the Vice President for Administration.
- b. *Duties and responsibilities:*
  - i. Create all marketing materials and external communications.
  - ii. Manage and update all social media accounts.
  - iii. Develop and implement a consistent brand for the USS.
  - iv. Ensure compliance with VT licensing guidelines.
  - v. Design and order apparel for the senate.
  - vi. Design and procure all necessary print media.
  - vii. To ensure consistent marketing efforts, one (1) representative serves as a liaison to the Hokie Effect Assistant Director.
  - viii. Provide oversight for the USS photographer, videographer, and graphic designer(s).

#### **Section 4: Accountability Committee**

- a. Consists of one (1) at-large senator, one (1) UCSO senator, and three (3) college senators overseen by the Vice President and Representative to the BOV
- b. *Duties and Responsibilities*
  - i. This committee may be charged with investigating concerns and developing solutions for the USS as requested by the Senior Advisor (or designee) to the Undergraduate Student Senate.

#### **Section 5: Membership Development Committee**

- a. Consists of one (1) at-large senator, one (1) UCSO senator, and two (2) college senators led by the Director of Staff Development and overseen by the Vice President for Administration.
- b. *Duties and responsibilities:*
  - i. Design and implement necessary on-boarding materials or processes for all USS representatives.
  - ii. Create opportunities for representatives to build leadership skills and competencies.
  - iii. Design and implement advisor-approved organization retreats.
  - iv. Host at least one (1) advisor-approved social for USS representatives per semester.

- v. Ensure that all USS members (cabinet, senators, directors, assistant directors) create transition packets each year.
- vi. Create opportunities for, and check-in on, representative(s) well-being.

### **Section 6: Appropriations Committee**

- a. Consists of two (2) at-large senators, two (2) UCSO senators, and four (4) college senators overseen by the Vice President for Finance.
- b. *Duties and responsibilities:*
  - i. To allocate funds from the Student Activity Fee to Registered Student Organizations on campus.
  - ii. Work closely with members of the Graduate Student Budget Board to ensure communication and policy alignment.
  - iii. Communicate consistently with student organizations regarding funding deadlines, policy updates, and other critical information.
  - iv. Consistently evaluate policy for best practices, biases, and opportunities to enhance student organization needs.
  - v. Work closely with the SECL to form the annual budget request.
  - vi. Select representation to serve on the Student Finance Leadership Committee.

### **Section 7: Special Programs Committee**

- a. Consists of one (1) at-large senator, one (1) UCSO senator, and two (2) college senators overseen by the Vice President for Issues and Policy
- b. *Duties and responsibilities:*
  - i. Brainstorm, create, and execute events and programs for the USS that align with the USS mission. Programs may include, but are not limited to, a Welcome Back Event, Governance Forums, Town Halls, Inauguration, and End of Year Banquet.
  - ii. Reserve space and equipment for on-campus programs.
  - iii. Work in tandem with other senators to ensure programs align with the needs of the student body.

## **Article VII: Representation in University Governance**

In order to advance the institutional vision for shared governance, participation in the University Council and other university-level bodies is a core responsibility of the Undergraduate Student



Senate. The USS maintains representation on the University Council; senate and university commissions; and university standing committees. Additionally, there are numerous entities outside of university-level governance, as noted in Section 4 of the Article, to which the USS is expected to provide representation.

### **Section 1: University Council**

The University Council acts as the apex body for policy recommendations to the President of the University and the Board of Visitors. The Undergraduate Student Senate has four (4) *ex officio* representatives on the University Council who are expected to discuss or present policies or issues that affect the student body. Details of the USS membership on the University Council are found in Article V of the University Council Constitution.

### **Section 2: Commissions**

The senate and university commissions are the primary bodies for policy formation at Virginia Tech. Every commission includes at least one (1) representative from each of the senates as well as the administration. Details of the USS membership on the commissions are found in Article VII of the University Council Bylaws.

### **Section 3: University Standing Committees**

University standing committees are constituted on a continuing basis by the President of the University on recommendation of the University Council to deal with matters of a university-wide interest. Details of the USS membership on university standing committees are found in Article VIII of the University Council Bylaws.

### **Section 4: Entities Outside University Governance System**

- a. *Campus and Workplace Violence Prevention Committee*
  - i. There shall be one (1) USS representative assigned to this committee.
- b. *Parking Citation Appeals Subcommittee*
  - i. There shall be two (2) USS representatives assigned to this sub-committee.
- c. *Title IX Committee*
  - i. There shall be one (1) USS representative assigned to this committee.
- d. *Experiential Learning Student Advisory Committee*
  - i. There shall be one (1) USS representative assigned to this committee.
- e. The USS President (or designee) is appointed to the following entities:

- i. Council on Virginia Tech’s History
  - ii. President’s Committee on Governance
  - iii. State Council for Higher Education (SCHEV) Student Advisory Council
  - iv. University President’s Advisory Council
  - v. VPSA Student Leadership Advisory Team
  - vi. Blacksburg Town Council
    - 1. Typically this appointment is held by the USS Director of Governmental Relations.
- f. The USS Director of Governmental Relations is appointed to the following entities:
- i. Town Gown
  - ii. Blacksburg Town Council
  - iii. Voter Education and Engagement Coalition

### **Section 5: Election and Responsibilities of University Governance Representatives**

USS representatives in university governance shall be a USS member and/or a member of the student body. Except for *ex officio* positions and positions filled by means of appointment by the President of the University, these positions will be filled by a) the creation of a slate of candidates by majority vote of the cabinet and b) subsequent vote by the USS as a whole in an effort to create an equitable yet efficient process. Nominees for positions filled by presidential appointment will be voted on by the USS.

Prioritizing the interests of the student body will always be the paramount responsibility of the university governance representatives. To enhance transparency, all representatives will submit and present a report, per entity, to the senate each week. These reports shall be made public for the convenience of the student body.

University governance representatives must attend all meetings of the council, commission, and/or committee they have been appointed to. Failure to attend a meeting must be reported to the Vice President for Shared Governance and attendance for university governance service will be evaluated by the policy in Article XI of the bylaws.

In the event that a body itself does not define the term of membership, all appointments will end with the conclusion of the last meeting of the University Council in the spring semester.

### **Section 6: Application for University Governance Vacancies**

Candidates for university governance positions must fill out an application, submit a resume and references, and interview with the President, Vice President of Shared Governance, and/or other members of the cabinet as needed. Any member of the student body is eligible to apply for these positions as long as they meet the eligibility requirements outlined in Article V, Section 1 of the constitution. Applications shall be made available to all members of the student body. From these applicants, the cabinet will create the slate of candidates referred to in Section 5 above. Vacated positions will be filled by this same process.

When there are no applicants for a position and/or a position is still open thirty calendar days after the request from the Office of the Vice President for Policy and Governance for the USS service assignments, the Senior Advisor or designee may attempt to fill these vacancies directly, without utilizing the application process. However, selections made in this manner must be ratified by vote of the USS.

## **Article VIII: Types of Legislation**

### **Section 1: Types and Designations**

- a. Proposed changes to the constitution shall be considered an “Act.”
- b. Proposed changes to the bylaws shall be considered a “Bill.”
- c. Proposed legislation that represents an official expression of opinion or will of the senate shall be considered a “Resolution of Student Experience”, denoted R-SE.
- d. Proposed legislation that addresses policy shall be considered a “Resolution for Policy”, denoted R-P.
- e. Proposed legislation to allocate funding internally or externally shall be considered a “Resolution for Funding Request,” denoted FR.

### **Section 2: Resolution Coding System**

- a. All legislation shall be advanced in the form of a resolution and all resolutions shall be given a number based on the legislation type, sequential number of that type, and academic year, prior to its first reading.
  - i. (Example: 2021-22 – A1 stands for the first Act of the 2021-22 USS)
  - ii. *Acts* will be designated by an “A.”
  - iii. *Bills* will be designated by a “B.”
  - iv. *Resolutions* will be designated by an “R.”
  - v. *Funding Requests* will be designated by “FR.”

- b. Resolutions must also include the names of author(s) and sponsor(s), a title, whereas and therefore statements, a signature line for the President of the USS, the Vice President for Issues and Policy, and no less than one (1) other cabinet member, and the USS logo on official letterhead.
- c. After a resolution has been voted on, a “PASSED” or “FAILED” designation shall be included in the coding system.
  - a. All vote counts must be accurately documented in the minutes and all votes will be by recorded ballot.

## **Article IX: Legislative Policies and Paths**

### **Section 1: Authors and Sponsors**

- a. As stated in the USS Constitution, any senator in the USS may author or sponsor legislation.
  - i. An author is the individual(s) responsible for drafting the legislation, seeking out sponsor(s), and shall be the point of contact for the legislation.
  - ii. A sponsor is an individual that supports the will and initiative of the piece of legislation by having their name associated with the legislation.
  - iii. There is no limit to the number of sponsors a piece of legislation may have.
- b. Any cabinet member may author Acts or Bills. If a cabinet member chooses to author an Act or Bill, it must be sponsored by at least one (1) senator.
- c. The Vice President for Finance may author resolutions pertaining to the annual budget.

### **Section 2: Funding Requests**

#### *a. Internal.*

Any representative who wishes to apply for internal funding must:

- i. Notify the Vice-President of Finance before presenting in open forum for their request, including the amount requested and what the funds will be used for.
- ii. Find a sponsor in the USS who is willing to write a funding request on their behalf. If a representative is applying for funding, they must find an additional co-sponsor within the branch for their request.
- iii. Introduce legislation in the USS that outlines the following related to their request:

1. The purpose of the funds.
2. Reasons the funds are required from the Annual Contingency account.
3. Contribution of the funding to the mission of the USS.
4. An itemized budget of how the funds will be used.

The legislative sponsor(s) of this request, alongside the partnering USS Representative, if they are not a senator, must present the legislation jointly.

- iv. Present a summary of the event that addresses:
  1. If the amount of funding was sufficient.
  2. What steps can be taken to improve the event going forward, if it is to be a continual event

The presentation must occur within two Senate Meetings following the completion of the event or purpose for the allocation, unless extenuating circumstances delay the presentation

*b. External*

- i. External organizations, including but not limited to Registered Student Organizations (RSO), University Chartered Student Organizations (UCSO), University Student Leadership Programs (USLP), and university departments that are not housed within the USS, may only request up to a maximum of one thousand (\$1,000) dollars.
- ii. The USS shall be in all promotional materials for External Funding Requests we fulfill.

### **Section 3: Veto of Resolutions**

- a. No later than seventy-two (72) hours after a resolution has been passed by the USS, one (1) or more cabinet representatives may make a request to the president and the appropriate vice president that the cabinet vetoes the resolution.
- b. The president must convene the cabinet to consider such a request. After discussing the reasons for the request and the resolution in question, the cabinet will vote on the veto. All cabinet representatives must participate in the vote. A veto is sustained by a two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) affirmative vote of the cabinet, that being five (5) out of the seven (7) cabinet representatives.
- c. At the following USS meeting, the cabinet must present a statement that explains why the cabinet chose to veto the resolution. This must be presented by the representative who originally proposed the veto to the cabinet.

- d. After this presentation, the USS will have the opportunity for a Q&A and discussion, upon the completion of which a vote will take place on the question of overturning the veto. In all instances except changes to the USS Constitution and/or Bylaws, the veto is overturned by a majority (over ½) affirmative vote of USS members present and voting, provided that a quorum has been achieved. To overturn a veto of the USS Constitution and/or Bylaws requires a 2/3 majority vote.
- e. A veto of the cabinet may not be overturned and may be reintroduced the following academic semester as appropriate.
- f. At least one member of the Advising Team must be in attendance where legislative acts occur within the USS.

#### **Section 4: Legislative Record**

- b. There shall be one (1) physical copy of all introduced legislation in a binder titled “The Legislative Record of the Undergraduate Student Senate” within the USS office
  - i. This record shall be organized by passed and failed legislation in chronological order.
  - ii. The legislative record shall be maintained by the Vice President of Administration.

At the end of the academic year, the file shall be bound and titled “Legislative Record of the Undergraduate Student Senate of Virginia Tech for the Academic Year XXXX.” USS legislation will follow the paths and policies presented below.

#### **Section 5: Path of Resolutions for Policy (RP)**

- a. The USS may author a resolution for policy (RP) for consideration by the CUSA, but the USS may not introduce a resolution for policy (RP) directly to the University Council. Any resolution that involves a policy change (RP) must be approved by the CUSA prior to senate review and vote; then, if approved by the senate, the RP is forwarded to the University Council for consideration.
- b. Resolutions involving a policy change (RP) may originate within the CUSA or may be taken up for consideration by the CUSA at the request of the USS, the University Council, the president, or another member of university leadership. Regardless of how the RP originates, once it is approved within the CUSA, it will go to the full senate for a vote.

- c. The USS will follow the process of resolution review and voting as outlined in Article III of the University Council Bylaws, including a first and second reading of all resolutions. To be advanced by the USS to the University Council, a resolution must receive a majority (over ½) affirmative vote of USS members present and voting, provided that a quorum has been achieved, to be considered “passed” by the USS.
- d. If a majority vote is not received, the resolution fails and can only be re-introduced with the approval of two (2) cabinet representatives or in the following academic semester.
- e. A resolution approved by the USS shall be signed by the President of the USS, the Vice President for Issues and Policy, and no less than one (1) other cabinet representative to certify it was approved by the USS.
- f. Once approved, the resolution shall be sent to the Secretary of the University Council, to be put on the agenda for University Council meeting(s).
- g. Following a second reading in the University Council, the council shall vote on the resolution. If the resolution receives a simple majority (over ½) affirmative vote of those present and voting, provided that a quorum has been achieved, the resolution is advanced to the President of the University for consideration. Most resolutions also require the approval of the Board of Visitors before they are officially adopted.

## **Section 6: Path of All Other Legislation (non-RP)**

- a. Senators are required to meet with university officials and other relevant stakeholders in order to acquire full information about their chosen topic and to work closely with university entities relevant to their legislation prior to voting of any kind.
- b. After a first draft of the legislation has been written by one (1) or more senators, it must be considered by the committee on which the primary author(s) sit. This is meant to ensure that the legislation is thoroughly reviewed and revised before being presented to the senate. Legislation should be discussed with the committee no less than two (2) times.
- c. After being reviewed in committee, the legislation must be sent to the Vice President for Issues and Policy to verify that nothing in the legislation's final draft is in conflict with the USS Constitution and Bylaws.
- d. Upon receiving written approval from the Vice President for Issues and Policy, the primary author(s) must send the final draft to the Vice President for Administration to be placed on the agenda and brought before the full senate.

- e. Once on the senate floor, the legislation must receive a majority (over ½) affirmative vote of members present and voting, assuming a quorum is present, in order to be considered “passed” by the USS.
- f. If a majority affirmative vote is not received, it fails, and can only be re-introduced with the approval of two (2) cabinet representatives or in the following academic semester.
- g. Passed legislation shall be signed by the President of the USS, the Vice President for Issues and Policy, and no less than one (1) other cabinet representative to certify it was passed by the USS.

## **Article X: USS Budget & Finance**

Annually, the Vice President for Finance and the Appropriations Committee will analyze, create, and present a budget to the USS. The budget will consist of needed expenses for the coming year. The budget must be approved by the USS. Funding for the USS comes from both Student Activities Fees and the Hokie Effect program.

### **Section 1: Major Projects Fund**

- a. This fund is for projects with a minimum cost of five thousand dollars (\$5,000).
- b. In years in which Hokie Effect net revenue exceeds sixty-five thousand (\$65,000), seven (7%) percent of the total net revenue will be allocated to this fund.
- c. Monies in this fund should be used to respond to and enhance the undergraduate student experience at Virginia Tech.

### **Section 2: Use of Funds**

- a. All representatives of the organization have authorization to utilize funds that are provisioned in the annual budget, but they must first receive written approval from the



Vice President for Finance and the USS President to guarantee that their request is indeed provisioned and still has available funding.

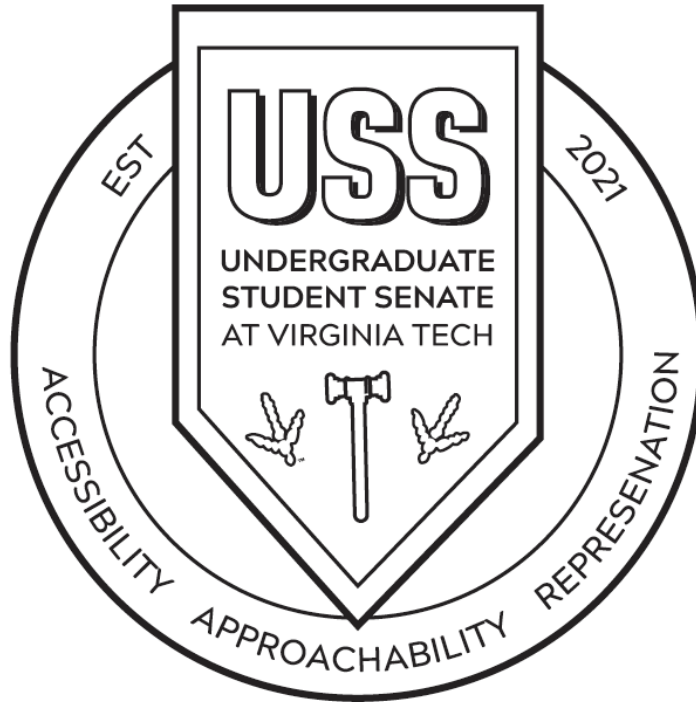
- b. The written approval from the Vice President for Finance, with signature by the USS President, must be attached to any invoices or requests for reimbursement; otherwise, payment will not be issued.

## **Article XI: Attendance**

- a. All representatives will be allotted a total of two (2) absences per semester per responsibility for the senate, council, commission, and/or committee meetings required by their service commitments. If a representative plans to use one of their allotted absences, they are expected to email the Vice President for Administration at least twelve (12) hours prior to the start of the meeting they will be unable to attend.
- b. If a representative has used both allotted absences and an unforeseen situation arises, the Vice President for Administration will elevate this information to the Graduate Advisor for the Student Senate who will address the matter with the representative. Any disciplinary action taken will be maintained as confidential.
- c. If a representative continues to miss meetings after a consultation with the Graduate Advisor, the Advising Team has the authority to remove the student from their position and a special election or appointment (based on the position) will be initiated to fill the vacancy.

## **Article XII: Misconduct Process**

Concerns or grievances regarding inappropriate or unethical behavior, misconduct, etc. shall be sent to the Advisor to the Undergraduate Student Senate & Assistant Director of Student Governance for review and adjudication. Anyone who submits a claim will be required to meet with the advisor and may be required to meet with the individual who is the subject of the claim. The advisor will address all issues raised and has the authority to deliver sanctions as needed, up to and including suspension with or without pay and/or the removal of a representative from the Undergraduate Student Senate for inappropriate behavior or misconduct. However, the advisor may elevate concerns to members of the Advising Team, Student Conduct, the Office of Title IX, or the Dean of Students, etc., depending on relevant laws and circumstances. If necessary, some minor infractions may be addressed by committee but only as directed by the advisor or any member of the Advising Team.



*The Undergraduate Student Senate Constitution  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University*

Authored: USS Transition Team, 2021  
Adopted: University Council of Virginia Tech, 2021  
Amended: January 2022



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## **Preamble**

We, the Undergraduate Student Senate of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), in order to facilitate an inclusive representation with a character of integrity and nurture an atmosphere of enhanced approachability and accessibility, pledge to protect student rights, promote equity and inclusion of all, investigate the welfare of students, and take the appropriate action to champion their needs, wants, and hopes for Virginia Tech. Furthermore, the Undergraduate Student Senate aim to provide a liaison between the undergraduate student body, faculty, and administration of the university, promote academic freedom and responsibility, and ensure transparent advocacy. As undergraduate students elected by our peers, we pledge to lead by exemplary boldness of character and to uphold the honor of *Ut Prosim* in all we do, and present this constitution and bylaws as the principal governing documents of the Undergraduate Student Senate at Virginia Tech.

## **Land Acknowledgement and Labor Recognition**

Virginia Tech acknowledges that we live and work on the Tutelo / Monacan People's homeland and we recognize their continued relationships with their lands and waterways. We further acknowledge that legislation and practices like the Morrill Act (1862) enabled the commonwealth of Virginia to finance and found Virginia Tech through the forced removal of Native Nations from their lands, both locally and in western territories.

We understand that honoring Native Peoples without explicit material commitments falls short of our institutional responsibilities. Through sustained, transparent, and meaningful engagement with the Tutelo / Monacan Peoples, and other Native Nations, we commit to changing the trajectory of Virginia Tech's history by increasing Indigenous student, staff, and faculty recruitment and retention, diversifying course offerings, and meeting the growing needs of all Virginia tribes and supporting their sovereignty.

We must also recognize that enslaved Black people generated revenue and resources used to establish Virginia Tech and were prohibited from attending until 1953. Through InclusiveVT, the institutional and individual commitment to *UT Prosim* (that I may serve) in the spirit of community, diversity, and excellence, we commit to advancing a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive community.

## **Article I: Name**

The name of the senate is the Undergraduate Student Senate of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, hereafter referred to as the Undergraduate Student Senate, the USS, or the USS at Virginia Tech.

## **Article II: Purpose**

The purpose of the Undergraduate Student Senate is to improve the undergraduate student experience by consistently demonstrating Ut Prosim and servant leadership in all endeavors; to represent and promote the values of Virginia Polytechnic and State University in formulating and implementing university policy; and to assist Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in its efforts to:

1. Provide an environment conducive to the pursuit of learning, scholarship, research, and service that promotes inclusion, wellbeing, and a sense of belonging for all undergraduate students.
2. Anticipate and meet the social, academic and developmental needs of all undergraduate students in a manner that enhances welcoming and inclusive community for undergraduate students at each Virginia Tech campus.

The Undergraduate Student Senate is part of the legislative system defined in the University Council Constitution. This system constitutes the main bodies for policy formation at Virginia Tech and also includes the A/P Faculty Senate, the Staff Senate, the Faculty Senate, the Graduate and Professional Student Senate, the university and senate commissions and their related committees, and the University Council. Domains of responsibility for each senate are outlined in Article VII of the University Council Constitution. The senate commissions formulate and recommend policies to the senates, which in turn recommend policies to the University Council; the university commissions formulate and recommend policies directly to the University Council. All senates have at least one commission assigned to them. The University Council makes policy recommendations to the president. Final authority rests with the president of the university and the Board of Visitors. Because these bodies constitute a legislative system, their functions, relationships, and the processes they hold in common are defined in the University Council Constitution and Bylaws. All aspects of the Undergraduate Student Senate not defined in those documents are defined in the USS Constitution and Bylaws.

USS policy recommendations are advanced in the form of resolutions as described in Article III of the University Council Bylaws; Article VII, Section 4 of the USS Constitution; and Articles VIII and IX of the USS Bylaws.

## **Article III: Functions & Scope**

### **Section 1. Official Charge**

Per Article VII, Section 7 of the University Council Constitution, the USS is charged as follows:

“The Undergraduate Student Senate shall be representative of the entire undergraduate student body and have the authority and responsibility to act on their behalf through legislative recommendations concerning campus life; academic and learning environment equity; undergraduate student health and wellness; dissemination of a portion of the student activity fee to registered student organizations; matters of equity, inclusion, and access that affect undergraduate students; and the learning conditions of the undergraduate student body.”

### **Section 2. Functions and Scope**

- To improve the undergraduate student experience.
- To enhance inclusion and diversity for all undergraduate students.
- To promote *UT Prosim* and servant leadership among the undergraduate student body.
- To promote the values of Virginia Polytechnic and State University.
- To advance the reputation and goodwill of all members of the Virginia Tech community.
- To develop and provide programs, information, and communications that enhance community among the undergraduate students that align with the goals of Virginia Tech.
- To consider resolutions and advance legislation that supports a positive student experience for all undergraduates.
- To refer appropriate matters within this *function and scope* to commissions, senates, groups, or individuals for consideration and recommendations.
- To allocate funds from the student activity fee to the recognized student organizations.
- To represent and demonstrate *UT Prosim* in all endeavors.

## **Article IV: Definitions**

- a. "Advising Team"-This term refers to the professional staff who are assigned to work, coach, and guide the student leadership within the USS. This team includes a senior advisor.

- b. “College”- This term refers to one of the nine academic colleges housed within Virginia Tech that are responsible for the execution of the academic curriculum. These nine colleges are *College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences*, *College of Engineering*, *College of Architecture and Urban Studies*, *Pamplin College of Business*, *College of Agriculture and Life Sciences*, *College of Natural Resources and the Environment*, *College of Science*, *Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine*, and the *Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine*.
- c. “Director”—This term refers to a selected member of the USS who holds an administrative role that helps the organization to function. Directors do not have voting rights within the USS.
- d. “Senator”- A senator is an elected undergraduate representative who holds voting authority for matters of legislation and internal USS operations inclusive of vice presidents.
- e. “Student Member”- all enrolled undergraduate students at Virginia Tech.
- f. “UCSO”- A University Chartered Student Organization (UCSO) is an organization that has significant campus impact through providing resources and/or services that are best delivered by students in conjunction with their sponsoring campus department. This classification of the organization must align with, and is integral to, departmental and university missions to create robust student experiences.
- g. “University Governance”- University Governance refers to the university governance structure, including the Faculty Senate, A/P Faculty Senate, Staff Senate, Graduate and Professional Student Senate, the University Council, all commissions, and the Board of Visitors.
- h. “Undergraduate Student Body”- All enrolled undergraduate students at Virginia Polytechnic and State University.
- i. “USS”- One of the official abbreviations for the full title of the Undergraduate Student Senate at Virginia Tech, and will be used on all the organization’s documents, marketing materials, and other important information.

## **Article V: Membership and Eligibility to Vote**

### **Section 1: Student Membership**

- a. All undergraduate students at Virginia Tech are members of this organization.
- b. All enrolled undergraduate students are eligible to vote in USS elections and referendums. When voting for college senators (see article IV, section d) within the USS, only undergraduate students who are currently enrolled within that college will be able to vote for their college senator.



- c. Members reserve the right to attend, participate, and engage in senate meetings and affairs to the extent that they are willing. However, daily operations, executive, and legislative actions will be the responsibility of the USS senators alone.
- d. USS Senators vote on all resolutions that come before the USS senatorial body.

## **Section 2: Non-Discrimination Policy**

Recognizing that Virginia Tech is an important part of Blacksburg, Montgomery County, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the United States, it should be incumbent upon every member to participate in activities that contribute to overall community well-being. Active members shall:

- a. Honor Virginia Tech's Principles of Community and respect all members of the community.
- b. Adhere to Virginia Tech's Non-Discrimination Statement contained in Presidential Policy Memorandum 112 (<https://policies.vt.edu/assets/112-non-discrimination-statement.pdf>).

## **Article VI: Organization**

The USS will exist as a unicameral structure consisting of senators, directors, and a cabinet. Additionally, the USS receives its operational authority from the Department of Student Engagement and Campus Life (SECL) and may not operate as an independent organization separate from SECL or Student Affairs. The USS is organized as follows:

- a. Seven (7) cabinet members (See Article IV, section d)
  - i. President
  - ii. Vice President for Issues and Policy
  - iii. Vice President for Shared Governance
  - iv. Vice President for Equity and Inclusion
  - v. Vice President for Administration
  - vi. Vice President for Finance
  - vii. Vice President and Representative to the Board of Visitors
- b. Directors and assistant directors
  - i. Details about each of the director positions can be found in the Article V of the bylaws
- c. At-large senators
  - i. Calculated to equal one (1) representative per 1000 undergraduate students
  - ii. This is calculated based on current enrollment at the time of elections
- d. College senators

- i. Calculated to equal one (1) representative per 750 undergraduate students or one (1) representative if the college is under 750
  - ii. This is calculated based on current enrollment at the time of elections
- e. Seventeen (17) UCSO senators
  - i. Representatives from the following organizations:
    1. Asian American Student Union (AASU)
    2. Black Organizations Council (BOC)
    3. Black Student Alliance (BSA)
    4. Council of International Student Organizations (CISO)
    5. HokiePride
    6. Interfraternity Council (IFC)
    7. Jewish Student Union (JSU)
    8. Latino Association of Student Organizations (LASO)
    9. Muslim Student Union (MSU)
    10. National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC)
    11. Panhellenic Council (PHC)
    12. Residence Hall Federation (RHF)
    13. United Council of Fraternities and Sororities (UCFS)
    14. Virginia Tech Union (VTU)
    15. Virginia Tech, Sophomore Class
    16. Virginia Tech, Junior Class
    17. Virginia Tech, Senior Class
- f. Two (2) Corps of Cadets senators
- g. The senate will be organized into committees, the details of which can be found in Article VI of the Bylaws.
- h. Standing committees include but are not limited to the following:
  - i. Issues and Policy Committees (2)
  - ii. Commission on Undergraduate Student Affairs
  - iii. Communications and Marketing Committee
  - iv. Special Programs Committee
  - v. Membership Development Committee
  - vi. Administration Committee
  - vii. Appropriations Committee
  - viii. Accountability Committee
  - ix. The Commission on Undergraduate Student Affairs (CUSA) will operate as a commission reporting to the USS. Details of its composition and operation are located in Article VII I of the constitution
- i. The USS will have an Advising Team of *ex-officio* members who are administrators at Virginia Tech.

- i. Administrative advisors (Advising Team) are appointed to the USS by Virginia Tech Student Affairs.

## **Article VII: Policies and Procedures**

### **Section 1: Policies of USS Meetings**

- a. The USS will hold bi-weekly meetings with the entire organization including all cabinet members, directors, senators, and advisors. These meetings will be free and open to current students, faculty, staff, and administrators of Virginia Tech. All guests or visitors must be approved to attend USS meetings in advance by the Senior Advisor. At least one advisor must be present at all USS meetings.
- b. The president shall serve as the presiding officer of senate meetings and will be responsible for all meeting operations, such as agendas, time limits, discussion procedures, and parliamentary procedures.
- c. Quorum for these meetings shall be defined as the presence of a majority (over  $\frac{1}{2}$ ) of all voting members and at least one advisor. Quorum must be obtained for any voting to take place; if a quorum is not obtained, the meeting may only occur for the purposes of reports, planning, and other similar objectives.
- d. In order to maintain proper communication and decorum during meetings, the meetings will be governed and operated according to Robert's Rules of Order.
- e. No USS meetings shall be longer than ninety (90) minutes unless an extension is approved by a two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) majority of the voting members present. Meetings can be extended by maximum of 30 minutes. With the additional time, no meetings can exceed a total of one-hundred and twenty (120) minutes.
- f. In the event that a senator wishes to overturn the decision of the president on a matter of parliamentary procedure, they make a motion to do so by saying, "Motion to overturn the decision of the chair." After the motion is seconded, the USS will be in recess for a maximum of five (5) minutes while the body discusses the presidential decision in question among members. The president then calls for a vote. If a majority of the body votes in the affirmative to overturn the decision of the president, the decision is reversed and the meeting proceeds. If the decision is not overturned, the meeting proceeds without further discussion and consideration of the motion.

### **Section 2: Student Rights During USS Meetings**

- a. USS meetings shall include a period of time in the agenda whereby any current student, faculty, or staff member of Virginia Tech is permitted to bring forth any topic or issue of their choice and present it to the USS. This time shall be designated as "Public Forum."

- b. All current students, faculty, and staff members are free and entitled to speaking and discussion rights at any point in the USS meetings. Nevertheless, any such discussion will have to be strictly within the bounds of the meeting's agenda. The presiding officer shall not entertain any dialogue that is purely meant to disrupt the work of the senate.
- c. Members who choose to participate and speak up will maintain a sense of decorum and respect during debate and discussion consistent with Robert's Rules of Order.
  - i. Participation by current members of the student body, faculty, and staff will be governed by the presiding officer of the USS. Public participants are not expected to be familiar with parliamentary procedure. However, they are expected to defer judgment to the presiding officer in matters of procedure and respect the decision of the presiding officer at all times.
- d. Members do not have the right to vote on legislation and matters of parliamentary procedure during the meetings of the USS but are entitled to the speaking rights as outlined previously.
- e. Members may not be given the floor if the presiding officer feels that excessive discussion will hamper the fulfillment of the meeting's agenda. However, if there is additional time left at the end of the session, any member will be allowed to share their perspectives on an issue that has already been discussed that day, in Public Forum.
- f. If a member is found to be deliberately disruptive to the senate proceedings, the presiding officer shall initially issue a warning to the individual. If such behavior is repeated, the presiding officer, with the advice of the cabinet, will ask the individual to vacate the meeting.

### **Section 3: Petitions & Requests**

- a. All members shall be able to bring an issue to a full senate vote by submitting a petition to any of the cabinet members bearing the signatures, official student email addresses, and dates of signature of at least five percent (5%) of the undergraduate student body and at least three senators, including a minimum of one college senator, one UCSO senator, and one at-large senator. The request will be reviewed in its entirety by the cabinet within fourteen (14) days and appropriate action will be taken afterward.
- b. All proposed amendments to the USS Constitution and/or Bylaws must be discussed with the Advising Team.

### **Section 4: Legislative Policies and Paths**

- a. Any senator in the USS, regardless of committee position, may choose to write and sponsor legislation on a topic of their choosing.

- b. Senators are required to meet with university officials and other relevant stakeholders in order to acquire full information about their chosen topic, and to work closely with appropriate university entities on the development of their legislation prior to voting of any kind.
- c. Any resolution that involves the creation or revision of policy must be reviewed and approved within the CUSA prior to senate review and vote.
- d. Legislation will follow the paths and additional policies outlined in the USS Bylaws.

## **Section 5: Elections**

- a. USS elections shall be governed by the following rules:
  - i. All senators, cabinet representatives, directors, assistant directors, committee members, and representatives to university-level governance bodies shall be elected to these positions, with the exception of *ex officio* positions. Though USS nominees for university standing committees shall be elected by the USS, the President of the University makes the final selection from these nominees.
  - ii. Elections shall be held on an annual basis.
  - iii. Elections shall be overseen by the Advising Team.
  - iv. Elections shall be carried out via an electronic balloting system.
  - v. Upon conclusion of an election, the candidate that receives a majority of the votes shall be declared the winner and candidate-elect for that position.
  - vi. All USS candidates are subject to and shall abide by the official USS election rules and regulations hereby known as the election code which is a separate document from the constitution and bylaws.
  - vii. All terms are one-year, defined by the period of time between inaugurations. Some members of the CUSA maybe renewed annually by the Senior Advisor on the Advising Team.

## **Section 6: Line of Succession**

Should the president vacate the office for any reason, the line of succession is as follows: Vice President for Issues and Policy, Vice President for Shared Governance, Vice President for Equity and Inclusion, Vice President for Administration, Vice President for Finance, Vice President and Representative to the Board of Visitors.

Should a Vice President vacate their office for any reason, a special election will be held.

## **Section 7: Stipends**

Cabinet members are eligible to receive a stipend, subject to annual determination by and provision from Virginia Tech Student Affairs.

## **Article VIII: Commission on Undergraduate Student Affairs (CUSA)**

### **Section 1: Official Charge**

Per Article VIII, Section 7 of the University Council Constitution, the Commission on Undergraduate Student Affairs is charged as follows:

“To study, formulate, and recommend to the Undergraduate Student Senate policies and procedures pertaining to the undergraduate student experience at Virginia Tech. Areas for consideration include undergraduate student life, wellbeing, inclusion, and morale; undergraduate student relations with peers, staff, faculty, administrators, alumni, and the community; policy matters related to undergraduate student conduct; undergraduate student organizations, social life, and recreation; employment, placement, and counseling; and residential and campus life, health, safety, and quality of undergraduate student related services.”

### **Section 2: Membership**

The Vice President for Shared Governance will oversee and chair the CUSA. Senate representatives will be elected or appointed by their respective senate or division head. The membership of the commission is as follows:

- a. USS Vice President for Shared Governance
- b. Vice President for Student Affairs (VPSA)
- c. Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs (VPUA)
- d. Dean of the Graduate School
- e. Vice President for Policy and Governance (VPPG)
- f. Vice President for Strategic Affairs for Inclusion and Diversity (VPID)
- g. Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and Experience VT (AVP)
- h. Two (2) A/P Faculty representatives from the Division of Student Affairs appointed by the Vice President for Student Affairs
- i. One (1) Faculty Senate Representative (FS)
- j. One (1) Staff Senate Representative (SS)
- k. Two (2) Graduate and Professional Student Senate Representatives (GPSS 1 & GPSS 2)
- l. One (1) A/P Faculty Representative

- m. USS appointments:
  - Four (4) USS At-large Senators
  - Four (4) USS UCSO Senators
  - Four (4) USS College Senators

## **Article IX: Amendments to the USS Constitution and/or Bylaws**

### **Section 1. Development of Recommendations**

The Senior Advisor for the Undergraduate Student Senate will convene an ad hoc committee to review recommended amendments to the USS Constitution and/or Bylaws. The ad hoc committee may include USS senators, members of the CUSA, students, faculty, staff and/or administrators. A two-thirds (2/3) affirmative of the ad hoc committee is required to advance amendments to the constitution and/or bylaws.

### **Section 2. Approval of Amendments to the USS Constitution**

Upon approval by the ad hoc committee, proposed amendments to the USS Constitution proceed to the CUSA for development as a CUSA resolution and become effective upon the following sequence of actions:

- a. An affirmative majority vote by the CUSA.
- b. An affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of USS senators present and voting, provided that a quorum has been reached.
- c. An affirmative vote in the University Council of the majority of members present and voting, provided that a quorum has been reached.
- d. Approval by the president of the university.

### **Section 3. Approval of Amendments to the USS Bylaws**

Upon approval by the ad hoc committee, an amendment to the USS Bylaws becomes effective upon an affirmative vote of the majority of the USS senators present and voting, provided that a quorum has been reached, and requires no further approval.

### **Section 4: Notice of Proposal**

Notice of proposal to amend the USS Constitution or Bylaws shall be given in the senate agenda and considered at no fewer than two meetings of the senate prior to voting. The proposed amendment shall be distributed with the agenda.

## **Article X: Determination of Legislative Authority**

In order for the shared governance system of Virginia Tech to function as intended, the roles and authority of its different components, including the Undergraduate Student Senate and the Commission on Undergraduate Student Affairs, must be maintained, and participants in shared governance are expected to adhere to the statements of purpose, function, or charge contained in the University Council Constitution. Senate and commission charges identify the areas of legislative authority and responsibility for the relevant body. These charges are not exhaustive: when questions arise regarding the relevance of the topic of a resolution to a commission or senate charge, they will be addressed to the University Council parliamentarian, and if necessary, the University Council Cabinet. Per Article III, Section 3 of the University Council Bylaws, determination of the authority of a commission to advance a resolution rests with the University Council Cabinet and the University Council.



**Commission on Student Affairs**  
**CSA Resolution 2021-22D**  
**Resolution for Secure Equitable Funding for Cook Counseling**

First Reading by GPSS:	Nov 18th, 2021
Second Reading by GPSS:	Dec 2nd, 2021
First Reading by Commission on Student Affairs:	Feb 17th, 2022
Staff Senate Review:	date
Faculty Senate Review:	date
Undergraduate Student Senate Review:	date
Approved by Commission on Student Affairs:	TBD
First Reading by University Council:	date
Approved by University Council:	date
Approval by University President:	date
Approved by Board of Visitors:	date
Effective:	upon approval

**WHEREAS**, Cook Counseling is an necessary part of the Virginia Tech community and is absolutely essential for students mental health and well being; and

**WHEREAS**, while Cook Counseling provides numerous resources to both graduate and undergraduate students in the form of individual and group counseling, there is still a large need for more access to mental health services as evidenced by the growing demand that has forced Cook to prioritize group counseling over other options; and

**WHEREAS**, the benefits of counseling are numerous and include greater self-acceptance and self-esteem, better management of emotions, increased confidence and decision making skills, ability to manage stress better, greater sense of self purpose and many more (Appendix 1); and

**WHEREAS**, the increased need for counseling and mental health services has been made more apparent by Covid-19 with approximately 43% of college aged individuals concerned about their mental health (see Appendix 2); and

**WHEREAS**, Cook Counseling has made an effort to increase services to serve more students through group counseling, but many students may not feel comfortable in a group setting nor may their treatment for mental health be appropriate for group therapy and yet because of demand and lack of funding they are unable to secure alternative modes of therapy; and

**WHEREAS**, most students who access Cook Counseling attend 5 or 6 individual sessions throughout the school year (Appendix 3) and often have to wait several weeks before being admitted to see a therapist; and

**WHEREAS**, a proposition to charge students who utilize more than 10 individual therapy sessions to be charged \$20 per session and \$15 for psychiatric session to keep up with the

financial needs of Cook Counseling was met with opposition and (Appendix 3) coupled with that, approximately 60% of college aged students reported difficulties accessing mental health services during the pandemic (Appendix 2); and

**WHEREAS**, Virginia Tech's student population continues to increase, so there is a need for resources including those for mental health services; and

**WHEREAS**, the pandemic has exacerbated many preexisting mental health needs and has generated significantly higher need while the university has not increased Cook's funding concurrent with that need; and

**WHEREAS**, while the university is competitive with other universities and the therapy services they provide (by hovering at around 1 therapist per 1000 students), being competitive with other universities who are likewise not meeting the needs of their students is an insufficient justification for not increasing the funding for Cook and other essential services (see Appendix 2); and

**WHEREAS**, despite relying on these services for their wellbeing, graduate students have historically had very little input into the decision-making process for allocating resource to Cook and other essential student services like Schiffert; and

**WHEREAS**, the spirit of this resolution should be taken as both expanding an essential service for graduate and undergraduate students as well as increasing the opportunities for students to voice input into the funding of these vital resources (see, also, GPSS Resolution 2021-2022W); and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that greater financial priority be given to Cook Counseling to support staffing more counselors and allow Cook Counseling to continue to serve the graduate and undergraduate student population through both individual session and group session over other uses of fees, such as athletics; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a task force be charged, made up of undergraduate and graduate students as the stakeholder portion alongside Cook representatives, budget office representatives, and other decision-makers, to audit the current Cook practices in light of growing demand and the need created by COVID-19 and make financial recommendations to ensure students are supported fully. This charge should go beyond maintaining our competitiveness with other institutions and instead be focused on meeting student needs and being a leader in how universities grapple with mental health on campus. It should also be used to develop further mechanisms for voicing input into fee structures at the university and how students and graduate students can advocate for fee changes in line with their priorities.

## **Appendix 1: Benefits of Counseling for College Students:**

Benefits of counseling as detailed by colleges and universities.

<https://www.coe.edu/student-life/student-life-resources/health-wellness/mental-health-counseling/potential-benefits-counseling>

<https://campus.plymouth.edu/counseling/for-students/benefits-of-counseling/>

There are many additional resources for the benefits of counseling and strategies for improving mental health provided by our very own counseling center that we recommend looking at as well: [https://ucc.vt.edu/self\\_help\\_support\\_strategies.html](https://ucc.vt.edu/self_help_support_strategies.html)

## **Appendix 2: Covid-19 and the Toll on Mental Health**

Data from Aetna, VT graduate student's insurance provider, regarding the impact of Covid-19 on people's mental health: <https://cvshealth.com/sites/default/files/cvs-health-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-mental-well-being-in-the-us.pdf>

<https://www.benefitnews.com/advisers/news/the-pandemic-is-taking-a-toll-on-gen-zs-mental-health-cvs-survey-finds>

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/coronavirus-turmoil-raises-depression-risks-in-young-adults-11597066200>

There are also challenges facing access to healthcare across universities as denoted here: <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/07/13/survey-finds-higher-prevalence-depression-among-students-and-difficulties-accessing>

## **Appendix 3: Cook Counseling Proposed Fees**

[http://www.collegiatetimes.com/opinion/reversal-of-cook-counseling-fees-does-not-represent-progress/article\\_e12dadb4-e891-11ea-a74c-af88ea88b24f.html](http://www.collegiatetimes.com/opinion/reversal-of-cook-counseling-fees-does-not-represent-progress/article_e12dadb4-e891-11ea-a74c-af88ea88b24f.html)

We take this resistance among the students to be a dissatisfaction at forcing users of Cook to bear the brunt of expanding their services and instead arguing that this cost should be distributed across the university or even privileged over other prominent fees such as the athletics fee. Mental health resources, much like healthcare, ought to be a public right and should be prioritized in university financial decision-making as well as have the cost distributed across all hokies and not just users of the service in the spirit of *Ut Prosim*.

**Commission on Student Affairs  
CSA Resolution 2021-22C  
Resolution to Make Student Services More Readily Available for Graduate Students  
During the Semester and Summer**

First Reading by GPSS:	Nov 18th, 2021
Second Reading by GPSS:	Dec 2nd, 2021
First Reading by Commission on Student Affairs:	Feb 17th, 2022
Staff Senate Review:	date
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Undergraduate Student Senate Review:	date
Approved by Commission on Student Affairs:	TBD
First Reading by University Council:	date
Approved by University Council:	date
Approval by University President:	date
Approved by Board of Visitors:	date
Effective:	upon approval

**WHEREAS**, graduate and undergraduate students rely heavily on services provided by Virginia Tech (Schiffert, Cook Counseling, etc.) since many students have limited access to transportation or affordable care options outside of the ones their fees go to; and

**WHEREAS**, resources that Virginia Tech provides are especially valuable for graduate students because graduate students barely make ends meet during the semester, leaving graduate students with limited disposable income at the end of the month and often not enough to cover outside expenses such as health care, counseling, etc (Appendix 1); and

**WHEREAS**, if graduate students are to have their stipend increased, as proposed in CGPSP 2021-22D, graduate students will still have limited financial resources that may not cover outside expenses such as health care or mental health services; and

**WHEREAS**, graduate students, unlike undergraduate students, are generally required to work for the university or conduct research during the summer and as a result are required to be on/near Blacksburg or their satellite campuses; and

**WHEREAS**, the satellite campuses in particular already have limited access to student services during the semester and often have limited transportation and affordable services nearby, which makes this problem especially dire for those graduate students; and

**WHEREAS**, graduate students who do not register for classes during the summer or winter semester often have to pay a fee to be able to use services (such as Schiffert and Cook Counseling, see Appendix 2) which can add an additional financial burden to students whose stipend is not covered during the summer months; and

**WHEREAS**, currently graduate students lack meaningful avenues to voice concerns about fees, limited to the Board of Visitors representative who is often not given enough time during meetings to adequately convey complicated financial recommendations when it comes to fees such as those documented in the following statement; and

**WHEREAS**, in the spirit of community and *ut prosim*, the senate argues that some fees, such as the health services fee, should be paid even when students and graduate students don't personally utilize the service and even potentially increased to improve the quality of care available through these services. The senate also argues that other fees, such as the athletic fee, should be lowered to decrease the financial burden on graduate students. Currently there is no mechanism for advocating for fee changes along these lines or advocating for institutions through this pathway outside of the brief time the BoV representative receives; and

**WHEREAS**, graduate students working/studying at satellite campuses have fewer resources than those on main campus (Blacksburg) and are still barely making ends meet at the end of the semester; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that a task force will be created that will consist of graduate students, satellite campuses, and representatives from different resources (Cook Counseling, Schiffert, Libraries, Athletics, etc.) to determine the needs of graduate students during the summer and winter months as well as during the normal academic year; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that fees for summer and winter resources should appropriately reflect how much graduate students are being paid and not create unnecessary financial burden as determined by the task force. The spirit of this request, alongside resolution GPSS 2021-2022V, should be taken as trying to increase graduate student voice when it comes to advocating for fee changes through this policy; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that part of the charge of this task force is to give special attention to satellite campuses in order to ensure they have access to essential student services during the semester *and* during the summer as they report not having sufficient access at any time. The task force should complete its charge in a timely manner taking no more than two years to make recommendations to the university council and the board of visitors.

### **Appendix 1: Cost of Living Survey and Graduate Education Task Force Report**

The cost of living survey can be found here: <https://gsa.vt.edu/advocacy/2020-2021-advocacy/2021-cost-of-living-survey-results.html>

With the average take home pay and recommendations within the executive summary.

The Graduate Education Task Force Report can be found here:

<https://graduateschool.vt.edu/numbers/task-force-reports/2020-grad-ed-task-force-rept.html>

This Report recommends raising wages to be more competitive with peer institutions as well as points to our low grant application rates in comparison to peer institutions. When this was presented to the Board of Visitors, several members of the board commented on our low grant application rate and urged the graduate school to pursue strategies for increasing it.

### **Appendix 2: Student Fees for Virginia Tech 2021-2022 Academic Year**

A list of student fees for the fall, spring, summer and winter semester for graduate and undergraduate students.

[https://www.bursar.vt.edu/content/dam/bursar\\_vt\\_edu/tuition/2020-2021tuitionfees.pdf](https://www.bursar.vt.edu/content/dam/bursar_vt_edu/tuition/2020-2021tuitionfees.pdf)