

University Council Minutes
February 7, 2022
3:30 PM
1045 Pamplin Hall

Present: Cyril Clarke (presiding), April Myers, Ken Miller, Julie Farmer for Charles Phlegar, Ellen Banks for Bryan Garey, Dale Pike for Scott Midkiff, Kimberly Rhodes for Guru Ghosh, Kim O'Rourke, Daniel Sui, Menah Pratt-Clarke, Chris Kiwus, Lynsay Belshe, Chris Yianilos, Edwin Jones for Alan Grant, Daniel Givens, Rosemary Blieszner, Shaila Mehra for Laura Belmonte, Ron Fricker, Paul Winistorfer, Julia Ross, Robert Sumichrast, Lee Learman, Tyler Walters, Aimée Surprenant, Kelly Oaks, LaTawnya Burleson, John Benner, Sean Corcoran, Ariana Guevara, Robert Weiss, Christa Miller for Gabby McCollum, Jeffrey Alwang, Marcía Feuerstein, Janice Austin, Carla Finkielstein, Susan Anderson, Frances McCarty, Evan Lavender-Smith, Masoud Agah, Diane Agud, A.K. Ward Bartlett, Megan Wawro, Kathy Lu, David Tegarden, Kevin Davy, Kim Young for Laszlo Horvath, David Dugas, Patricia Raun, Paul Morton, Andre Muelenaer, Inga Haugen, Melissa Chase, Holli Gardner Drewry, Jalen Neal for Amanda Coleman, Karen Eley Sanders, Jennifer Earley, Nicole Akers, Bruce Harper, Tamarah Smith, Sue Teel, Jenny McCoy, Judy Alford, Amanda Leckner, Alice Fox, Mathew Flores, Jack Leff for Nicole Nunoo, Caroline Lohr for Miles Guth, Ainsley Cragin for Sharan Patnik, Phil Miskovic, & Paolo Fermin

Absent with notice: Tim Sands, Michael Friedlander, Lisa Wilkes, Robin Queen, & Serena Young

Absent: Frank Shushok, Steve McKnight, D'Arrin Calloway, Adyan Atiq, & Alex Pomeroy,

Guests: A list of guests present is attached.

Dr. Clarke called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. A quorum was present.

1. Adoption of Agenda

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

2. Announcement of approval and posting of minutes of December 6, 2021

Dr. Clarke 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>).

3. Commission Chair Reports

Dr. Clarke asked the Commission chairs to present briefly their goals for the academic year.

1. Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs – Janice Austin, Chair
 - a. Completed a resolution to add the A/P Faculty Senate president as a representative to the Board of Visitors
 - b. Will have several resolutions for second reading at University Council to add A/P Faculty representation to governance committees
 - c. Ongoing collaborations with the Administrative and Professional (A/P) Faculty Senate
 - d. Will conduct a thorough review of and develop a resolution for changes to the Faculty Handbook related to the A/P Faculty grievance process
 - e. Taking an active role in the Job Architecture Project with quarterly updates from Evans Lusuli, director of compensation in human resources
 - f. Postponed a resolution to add a non-voting member seat on University Council for the A/P Faculty Senate President

2. Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity – Christa Miller, Vice Chair

- a. Prospective APIDA resolution:
 - CEOD has decided to implement some of the recommendations from ICAC to move forward
 - Implementing a disaggregation data working group to take a look at how we can serve APIDA and other communities better
- b. Resolution forthcoming to rename The Strong Together Week to the Principles of Community Week which will be an update to Presidential Policy Memorandum (PPM) 286
- c. Will be shepherding updates to the EEO policy (Policy 1025) which is currently on pause due to legislation
- d. Will be reviewing PID workflow changes

3. Commission on Faculty Affairs – Ellen Plummer, Member

- a. Faculty Handbook/Policy Revisions and Updates
 - Follow-up from 2020-21 work
 - Ongoing revisions
- b. Will be discussing Conflict of Commitment with the Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation and the Commission on Research
- c. Will continue the advancement of the Faculty Service project
- d. Will continue work regarding SPOT (Student Perceptions of Teaching) scores
 - Development of best practices
 - Exploring bias in scores and impact on faculty by discipline/rank
 - Proposing split between teaching and facilities questions
 - Propose changes to the P&T requirements with regards to the way the teaching is evaluated and the use of SPOT scores in the evaluation
- e. Will discuss shared governance resolutions
- f. Faculty Reconciliation Committee modifications and associated Handbook changes

4. Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies – Marcía Feuerstein, Chair

- a. Working on a process for a Posthumous Degree Awarding Policy, which has been reviewed by various university offices including the Commission on University Support, Commission on Faculty Affairs, the Provost Office, and University Legal Counsel
- b. Focusing on graduate students with disabilities to identify and institute initiatives for making the accommodations process less intimidating and cumbersome
- c. Continue reviewing Graduate and Professional Student Senate resolutions for revisions and relevance before they are introduced to the commission
- d. Discussions with the Graduate School on a proposal regarding co-ops for graduate students to help fulfill the university's commitment to work-integrated learning.

5. Commission on Outreach and International Affairs – Robert Weiss, Chair

- a. Continues to make steady progress in gathering vital information to evaluate study abroad programs as an experiential learning activity
 - Presentation and accompanying discussions about accessibility, affordability, and concerns about how study abroad programs may extend the time to degree
 - Equity of access to study abroad programs and how it relates to financial problems, disability status, and how a student attends Virginia Tech (such as athletes are often excluded due to their training and competition schedule)
- b. Exploring options on how Virginia Tech can serve its land-grant mission by increasing economic development opportunities and increasing resilience in the rural area of Southwest Virginia.
 - Will have a first reading of a resolution to establish the Center for Rural Education

6. Commission on Research – Jeffrey Alwang, Chair

- a. Review and comment on Conflict of Interest/Commitment policy updates proposal
- b. Continue work on research faculty representation
- c. Working with several other areas of the university on data management
- d. Continuing work on the post-doc policy and chapter in the Faculty Handbook to cover post-doctoral professionals and general issues of interest to post-docs
- e. Review institutes
 - ICAT – has been completed
 - ISCE – expect to be completed for the March meeting
- f. Software procurement: have engaged ITPALS and expect to continue working on this through the Spring semester

7. Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs – LaTawnya Burleson, Chair

- a. Discussing tiered parking payment structure
- b. Considering updating staff position descriptions to accurately reflect job duties

8. Commission on Student Affairs – Ariana Guevara, Chair

- a. Infuse leadership lesson and conversations into the Commission on Student Affairs meetings
- b. Invite university leaders to CSA to have conversations with the members on the most pressing issues facing their constituencies
- c. Ensure the smooth transition of the Student Budget Board from the CSA to the Undergraduate Student Senate Appropriations Committee
- d. Continue supporting and hearing resolutions that may benefit the student body, as well as our Virginia Tech community

9. Commission on Undergraduate Studies and Policies – Sean Corcoran, Chair

- a. Will be reviewing a resolution from the Academic Support Committee regarding the inclusion of Juneteenth as a holiday on the academic calendar
- b. Will hear an update on the Academic Relief Policy from the Academic Affairs subcommittee
 - Student readmission/re-enrollment
 - Retractive timeline
 - Appearance of coursework on the transcript
- c. Will focus on cleaning up the academic polices in collaboration with the Registrar and the Office of Policy and Governance

10. Commission on University Support – John Benner, Chair

- a. Working with the Energy and Sustainability Committee to develop resolutions to further the Climate Action Commitment
- b. Will have a presentation on sustainable precision animal agriculture platform of the Center for Advanced Innovation in Agriculture
- c. Will have a presentation on Google Suite changes and updates
- d. Will have a presentation on Virginia Tech Seafood Agricultural Research and Extension Centers
- e. Will have a presentation on the campus master plan
- f. Will potentially have a presentation on the Greater Washington DC metro area

4. Unfinished Business

Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs

Resolution CAPFA 2021-22B

Resolution to Include the Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs to the Employee Benefits Committee Reporting Structure

Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs

Resolution CAPFA 2021-22C

Resolution to Revise the Membership of the Employee Benefits Committee to Add Three Administrative and Professional Faculty Senators

Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs

Resolution CAPFA 2021-22D

Resolution to Revise the Membership of the Commencement Committee to Add One Administrative and Professional Faculty Representative

Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs

Resolution CAPFA 2021-22E

Resolution to Revise the Membership of the Energy and Sustainability Committee to Add Two Administrative and Professional Faculty Representatives

Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs

Resolution CAPFA 2021-22F

Resolution to Revise the Membership of the Library Committee to Add One Administrative and Professional Faculty Representative

Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs

Resolution CAPFA 2021-22G

Resolution to Revise the Membership of the Transportation and Parking Committee to Add Two Administrative and Professional Faculty Representatives

Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs

Resolution CAPFA 2021-22H

Resolution to Revise the Membership of the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee to Add One Administrative and Professional Faculty Representative

Janice Austin presented resolutions CAPFA 2021-22 B, CAPFA 2021-22C, CAPFA 2021-22D, CAPFA 2021-22E, CAPFA 2021-22F, CAPFA 2021-22G, and CAPFA 2021-22H for second reading and made a motion to approve. The motion was seconded, and the motion passed.

5. New Business

Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies

Resolution CGPSP 2021-22D

Resolution to Institute a Living Wage for Graduate Students

Marcía Feuerstein presented the resolution for first reading and introduced Aimeé Surprenant, Dean of the Graduate School, and Jack Leff, President of the Graduate and Professional Student Senate, to provide background and answer questions on this resolution. Dean Surprenant and Mr. Leff gave a brief presentation (**attached**) that was followed by lengthy discussion. It was determined that there were nearly 500 people in attendance between in-person and Zoom participation. Comments submitted through the “chat” function on Zoom were recorded in a separate document, which is **attached** to these minutes.

All graduate students who commented spoke in favor of the living wage and having a majority of graduate students on the task force so that their lived experiences, particularly those of graduate students whose visas do not permit them to work, could be represented and taken into consideration. Several students related their

personal stories. Provost Clarke explained that task forces are appointed by university leaders, in this case, either President Sands, Provost Clarke, or Dean Surprenant. While Provost Clarke and Dean Surprenant agreed that having significant graduate/professional student representation on the proposed task force is necessary and important, neither was willing to commit to designating a specific percentage of seats on the task force to graduate/professional students. Vice President for Finance Ken Miller shared some facts (**fact sheet attached**) about the value of the overall benefits to graduate students on assistantship beyond the stipend, such as the tuition remission and the fact that it covers certain fees as well as tuition. He clarified that tuition remission is a cost to the university in terms of foregone revenue that is needed to support instruction. Several faculty spoke in favor of the resolution noting that graduate students should have a living wage and it also would make the university more competitive in recruiting graduate students. However, some faculty who were in favor also offered some caveats such as the risk of the resolution failing due to a dispute over the composition of the task force, or the potential of raising stipends to a level that would cause a PI to consider involving a technician or post-doc rather than a graduate student who has less experience and is there primarily to learn.

After a lengthy discussion Dr. Clarke summarized the discussion as follows:

1. It is in the interest of the university to look seriously at the issue of overall compensation and support for graduate students in terms of competitiveness and incorporate a commitment to provide a solution.
2. The composition of the taskforce will need to be discussed.
3. As the Vice President for Finance discussed, the overall cost of supporting a graduate student on assistantship needs to be considered, including the cost to the university for providing the tuition remission.
4. Consideration should be given to how principal investigators would address those graduate assistants who are funded through extramural grants and contracts and the pros and cons of involving graduate assistants versus technicians or post-docs.
5. Comments were made on the amount of financial aid available to graduate students. It should be determined what constitutes an assistantship and whether that can be considered a wage.

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

Marcía Feuerstein presented the resolution for first reading and introduced Jack Leff, President of the Graduate and Professional Student Senate, to provide background and answer questions on this resolution. He stated that changing the election of the GPSS leadership from the fall to May (taking office at the end of the spring rather than the beginning of spring) will allow for a smoother transition that can happen during the spring semester. This will also help to preserve institutional memory.

Kim O'Rourke noted that the new Graduate and Professional Student Senate Constitution and Bylaws that were approved through governance in Spring 2021 were the result of a year's work by the former Graduate Student Assembly, and they had come up with the current plan for leadership transitions to ensure that there would never be a time when the entire leadership of the GPSS would be brand new. According to the current plan, the Graduate/Professional Student representative to the Board of Visitors would take office on July 1, and the executive board of GPSS would take office at the start of spring semester. Jack Leff replied that the BOV representative was not fully integrated into the leadership of GPSS and the proposed change would align with the timing of leadership transitions in the other senates.

O'Rourke noted that according to the GPSS Constitution and Bylaws currently in effect, an election of the executive board was to have occurred at the end of fall semester, and that did not occur. She pointed out that if no election is held and the resolution is passed, then the current leadership of GPSS would actually be in office until May of 2023 (according to the proposed resolution). Leff and Alice Fox clarified that an election is currently under way for the GPSS executive board members, who would then take office in May 2022. Leff added that he is not seeking re-election as president of GPSS.

6. Announcement of Approval and Posting of Commission Minutes

These minutes have been voted on electronically and will be posted on the University web (<http://www.governance.vt.edu>). Note that the purpose of voting on Commission minutes is to accept them for filing. University Council Bylaws require that policy items be brought forward in resolution form for University Council action.

- Commission on Administrative and Professional Faculty Affairs
September 8, 2021
November 10, 2021
- Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity
November 16, 2021
- Commission on Faculty Affairs
November 19, 2021
- Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies
November 17, 2021
November 22, 2021
- Commission on Outreach and International Affairs
November 18, 2021
December 9, 2021
- Commission on Research
November 11, 2021
- Commission on Staff Policies and Affairs
November 30, 2021
- Commission on University Support
October 21, 2021
November 18, 2021

7. Adjournment-

There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 4:47 p.m.

CGPSP 2021-2022D

Resolution to Establish a Living Wage for Graduate Students

FEBRUARY 7TH, 2022

1

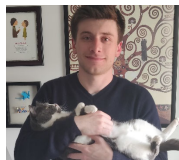
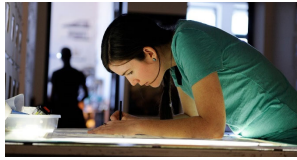
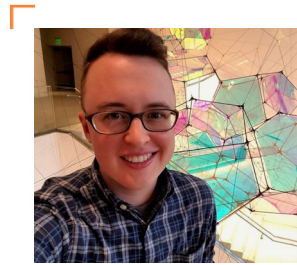
Our Graduate Students



- ~7,000 graduate students
- Average age: 26-30 years
- 50% married or partnered
- 25% have children
- Approximately 3,700 students on assistantships in any given year
- GTA, GRA, GA all come with tuition remission

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Graduate Student Challenges



- Graduate students are facing financial and economic hardships across Virginia.
- At Virginia Tech, 49% of international and 35% of domestic graduate students face food insecurity.
- The cost-of-living survey found that graduate students are not making enough to pay rent and medical costs. And the burden is especially cumbersome for international students.

3

What do our graduate students do?



4

Meet Joe Meister
 Master's program
 Engineering Education
 Blacksburg Campus



5


Meet Joe Meister
 Thesis-based master's program
 Engineering Education
 Blacksburg Campus

Joe's Finances:

Expenses	Monthly
Rent	\$819.92
Fees	\$306.44
Utilities	\$211.44
Groceries	\$200.00
Income Tax	\$310.41
Parking/transportation	\$150.87
Healthcare	\$92.51
Total	\$2,136.68

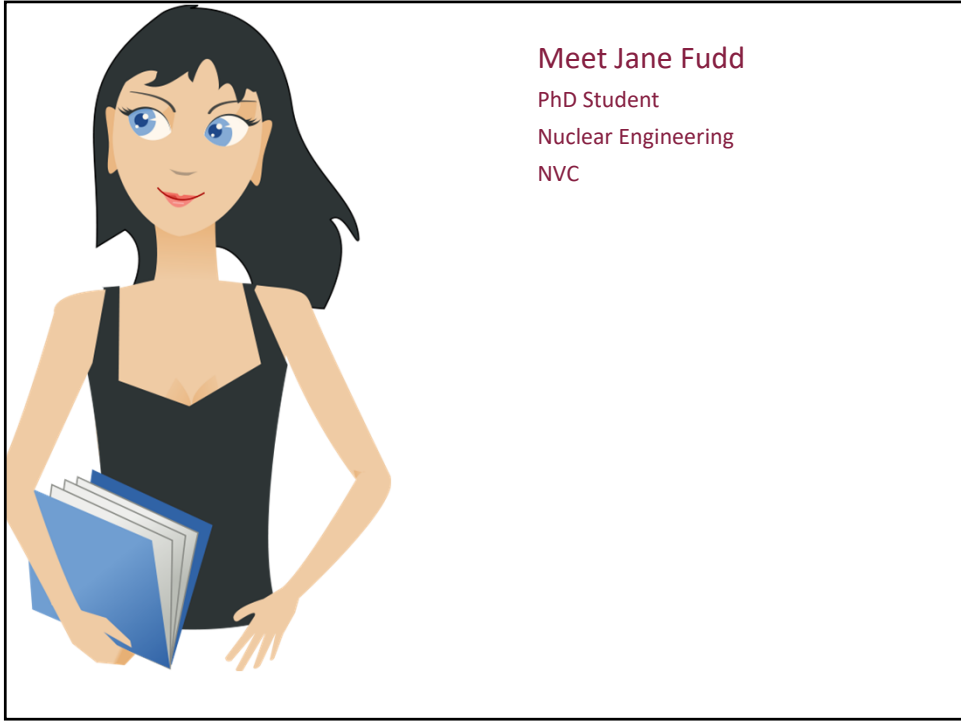
Stipend	Monthly
Total	\$2,154.90

Difference	Monthly
	\$18.22



Source: 2020-2021 Graduate Student Assembly Cost of Living Report

6



Meet Jane Fudd
 PhD Student
 Nuclear Engineering
 NVC

7

Meet Jane Fudd
 PhD Student
 Nuclear Engineering
 NVC

Jane's Finances:

Expenses	Monthly
Rent	\$1,562.29
Fees	\$83.50
Utilities	\$297.17
Groceries	\$200.00
Income Tax	\$261.93
Parking/transportation	\$200.60
Healthcare	\$146.10
Total	\$2,851.60

Stipend	Monthly
Total	\$2,175.79

Difference	Monthly
	-\$675.81

Source: 2020-2021 Graduate Student Assembly Cost of Living Report

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Further considerations

- Funding is a significant mental health stressor (VT GS Mental Health Task Force report)
- Funding is a significant factor in recruiting top students (VT .
- Funding is an equity issue, with students from underrepresented backgrounds often facing additional financial burdens that privileged students don't face. Which causes already stretched dollars to be stretched even farther.

9

Graduate Student Testimonies

"As a graduate student, it is hard to live without worrying about my financial situation during the academic year, not to mention the summer. The neverending rent increases, inflation of gas and food prices, and fees makes it hard to thrive in my academic life. Barely making ends meet is not enough."

"I have been a Virginia Tech graduate student since 2017, and attended VT as an undergraduate from 2005-2008. When I returned to Blacksburg, I was initially quite surprised at the increase in housing costs that had occurred since my time here as an undergrad. While I did manage to find an apartment in town to suit my needs, money was tight on my grad student stipend, and I was forced to find additional work to afford expenses, particularly since nearly 15% of our income goes directly back to the university for fees.

For two years of my schooling, I was fortunate enough to secure a fellowship which paid me double what departmental funding paid. I was able to focus exclusively on my studies and no longer stressed about having enough money for rent or over drafting my bank account. However, once this fellowship ended, I was forced to find new part time work in order to survive. I also could no longer afford to live in Blacksburg and had to move, first to Christiansburg and now to Roanoke. I do not have the luxury of having a partner, spouse, or family member who can financially support me. I live alone and pay my own rent and bills. In fact, last semester I was working 3 jobs to make ends meet, and ultimately burnt out and have since taken a Leave of Absence.

With the ever-increasing costs of housing that Blacksburg is seeing, the university MUST address the fact that graduate students make poverty wages and cannot afford housing in town. Additionally, national inflation has spiked other living costs such as utilities, food, etc. and the stipends are no longer acceptable."

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GOAL: For graduate students to be able to live on their assistantships

What does the resolution do?

- 1) Commits the university to provide a living wage to graduate students on assistantship by AY2023-2024 and establishes it as a university priority.
- 2) Charges a task force to develop a more in-depth financial plan for implementation and address logistical challenges with this university commitment.
- 3) Establishes a timeline and pathway for implementing this university value.

Why living wage?

A living wage is simply a commitment to provide necessary financial support to make sure that graduate students are supported during their duties without fears of food insecurity or lack of access to healthcare. While the term has been politicized in recent years, it is simply making sure that we are an institution that pays its graduate students enough to not be food or home insecure. It would be an adjustment in university priorities so we can establish a suitable baseline and don't wind up back in this position in five years.

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FAQ

Q: What about graduate students that are funded by external grants or fellowships?

A: If they make more than a living wage than they are already covered, but otherwise we will have to develop a hybrid contract format so that the university takes on some of those costs until grant organizations catch up to cost-of-living needs.

Q: Will this impact the number of graduate students we accept?

A: Graduate student enrollment continues to be a vital metric for the health of our graduate programs, and we do not expect this to resolution to negatively impact our enrollment. This is partly why this needs to be a university-wide mission. Competitive wages will make us significantly more desirable, so we expect an increase in applications and enrollment following implementation.

Q:

A:

Any other questions? Knowing about potential hurdles is helpful, but when you vote keep in mind that we don't need to have all the answers now. This resolution would give us time to work through any potential challenges with a dedicated task force.

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February 7, 2022

Overview of Graduate Assistantship Compensation

Graduate students who work as graduate assistants while pursuing their master’s or doctoral degrees provide a valuable service to the university. Many teach undergraduate classes while others support faculty in scholarly and sponsored research activities. To remain competitive in the recruitment and retention of high-quality graduate students, the university provides total compensation packages that are comparable with those offered by peer institutions.

The key components of the graduate student compensation package include stipend, tuition remission, and health insurance subsidy as outlined below:

Graduate Assistantship Compensation	2021-22	
	In-State	Out-of-State
Median Base Stipend (9-month, 0.5 FTE)	\$19,850	\$19,850
Stipend Supplement ⁽¹⁾	400	400
Subtotal Median Stipend⁽²⁾	20,250	20,250
Tuition Remission	14,098	28,415
E&G Fee Remission (Technology & Library Fees)	180	180
Program Fee Remission (A+D, BC, CALS, COE) ⁽³⁾	0-2,000	0-2,000
Health Insurance Subsidy (88% of total cost)	2,942	2,942
Immigration Services Fee Remission ⁽⁴⁾	-	0-550
(less) Comprehensive Fee Assessment	(2,244)	(2,244)
(less) Commonwealth Capital & Equipment Fee ⁽⁵⁾	-	(604)
Net Total Graduate Assistantship Compensation	\$35,226-\$37,226	\$48,939-\$51,489

(1) Stipend supplement established in 2011 to offset a portion of university assigned charges such as the Health Fee. Supplement is incorporated into total stipend payment in graduate student paychecks.

(2) Annual graduate stipends vary based upon the responsibilities and complexities of individual appointments. The interquartile range (25th percentile to 75th percentile) of graduate stipends are between \$19,233-\$21,339 per year (9-month full-time).

(3) Program fees vary by academic program and are funded as part of tuition remission. Executive program fees are not eligible.

(4) Immigration Services Fee applies to international students and is funded as part of tuition remission.

(5) Commonwealth Capital & Equipment Fee is required of all nonresidents and is remitted to the state.

- The university stipend scale was increased by 5 percent in FY22, effective August 10, 2021, consistent with the statewide employee salary increase.
- The Governor’s Executive Budget proposal includes a 5 percent statewide employee and graduate assistant salary increase for FY23, pending the outcome of the 2022 General Assembly (currently in session).

Comments made in the Zoom chat for the February 7, 2022, University Council meeting

From Caitlin Cridland

Hello, my name is Caitlin Cridland and I am a graduate student from the Biochemistry Department. I fully support CGPS&P Resolution 2021-2022D to Institute a Living Wage for Graduate Students.

15:54:35 From Joanna Reinhold

Hello! My name is Joanna Reinhold, and I am a graduate student in the Biochemistry Department. I fully support CGPS&P Resolution 2021-2022D to Institute a Living Wage for Graduate Students. Thank you!

15:56:27 From Catherine Freed

My name is Catherine Freed and I am a graduate student from the Biochemistry Department. I fully support CGPS&P Resolution 2021-2022D to Institute a Living Wage for Graduate Students

15:58:36 From Gokce Onen

Comp fee was not included in the expenses.

15:59:07 From Kayla Kester

My name is Kayla Kester. I'm a PhD student in the biochemistry department at Virginia Tech and I have come to support this resolution.

15:59:34 From Derya Ipek Eroglu

Hello, I would like to express that the expense table of Joe does not reflect the reality. A lot of things are missing or underestimated in the table. Thank you!

16:01:26 From Shakiba Davari

It is also important to keep in mind that international students do not have work permission] and are not allowed to have any other income. Also keep in mind that the currency difference makes sending money to the US even worse for many countries. So, unless if they are from an extremely rich family there is no possible way for them to make up for the low income.

16:06:00 From Menah Pratt-Clarke

That's my question: where is money coming from and what is impact on other university priorities?

16:07:01 From Damien P. Williams (He/Him)

The make-up of the taskforce proceeds from previous resolutions made by the GPSS, specifically giving space to the main stakeholder body.

16:07:59 From Damien P. Williams (He/Him)

proceeding from the disability justice axiom "nothing about us without us"

16:08:05 From E. Baris Ondes

Hello, I would like to express that the expense table of Joe does not reflect the reality in Blacksburg. A lot of things are missing (comprehensive fee, technology expenses, etc.) or underestimated (groceries) in the table. It would be great if you can deliver this to the council, too. Thank you!

16:10:28 From Julia Montgomery

Hello, my name is Julia Montgomery and I am a graduate student from the Biochemistry Department. I fully support CGPS&P Resolution 2021-2022D to Institute a Living Wage for Graduate Students.

16:13:16 From Damien P. Williams (He/Him)

NoVA students tend to be working professionals getting graduate and professional degrees part-time.

16:13:22 From Benjamin Miller

Re: the problems of what is a living wage and how we accomplish that. It sounds like a great job for the task force...

16:13:32 From Katelyn Singer

Why should graduate students have to sacrifice a basic living standard for the future? We aren't asking for a regular \$50,000 job salary that we'd get post-graduation.

16:13:40 From Katelyn Singer

We're asking for a basic living wage to live.

16:13:52 From Damien P. Williams (He/Him)

Meaning that their income is often already supplemented.

16:14:24 From (GPSS)Nicole Nunoo

Also, international students cannot borrow and so Dr. Alwang's solution does not hold for most international students.

16:15:25 From Menah Pratt-Clarke

I also want to add that we should also explore the impact of living wage for staff and AP professionals.

16:15:46 From Kregg Quarles

I think the immediate issue is that the current minimum pay for one student is not a living wage for one person in Blacksburg.

16:16:13 From Cyril Nsom Ayuk Etaka

Sorry I may have missed it. But can we know what it takes for a graduate student to be on the task force?

16:16:42 From Gates Palissery

Jeffrey Alwang's opinion is extremely privileged. What he proposes, saying graduate students can take loans out while banking on the fact that their degree will put them on "an income path" to pay those loans back. MANY students from underprivileged backgrounds are unable to take out loans the way Alwang suggests BECAUSE OF THEIR BACKGROUND. And to suggest otherwise is to say that not being able to take out a loan to survive means one should not be in graduate school.

16:17:44 From Christa Miller (she/her)

I understand the concerns of other council members related to the pre-defined Taskforce. But I would generally favor a membership that has substantial representation from graduate students. My concern is that some taskforce representation has consisted of those in administrative roles without the lived experience to support the work. This can lead to recommendations that lack "teeth". Would it be possible to simply state it as "multiple members who are graduate students"? This might help to address the concerns from both sides.

16:19:08 From Zuleka

International students are not even allowed to work other jobs. Can you image paying rent, bills, eating and medical expenses all on these wages? It is not too much to ask just for minimum wage or a little increase. The bottom line is graduate students are working professionals. The living wage ensures we are considered an important part of this community. Thank you.

16:20:08 From Dan Putnam (GPSS - FREC)

Hi there was a comment about the proportion of graduate students in attendance in the zoom room and I was just wondering if we could use a reaction in the zoom room to get a count of the graduate student representation out of the total

16:21:28 From Ashleigh Hillen she/they

People shouldn't be penalized based on their major

16:21:55 From Marcela Johnson

Other universities offer 100% health insurance, dental, tuition remission, and fees and their stipend is a lot higher than ours

16:22:09 From Damien P. Williams (He/Him)

Tuition Remission is accounted for in the body and appendices of the resolution, as are negative impacts of fee structures on real wages and cost of living

16:22:25 From Julia Armstrong

In state versus out of state is a scam. No one told me that I could apply for in state tuition and I had to seek it out myself. When I did, I was told I had missed the deadline and will now have to pay out of state fees for a year even though I am eligible for in state rates.

16:22:28 From Amilia Evans

Ken's argument is the typical argument. We can't even afford parking to work in our offices on campus

16:22:41 From Roan Parrish (she/her)

I would like to add a comment that adding comprehensive health insurance and tuition remission does not address the lived experience of graduate students actively choosing between food, rent, and medicine. Additionally, supporting us such that we can live stably means we have time and resources to seek outside funding such as grants and fellowships, thus supporting the university through our work.

16:22:48 From Julia Armstrong

If you want to bring up in state versus out of state, then make sure students are at least aware of the difference.

16:23:51 From Lakshmi Miller (GPSS Senator-AOE dept)

The medical insurance "subsidy" feels harder on a 2-week grad paycheck vs other employees: in relevance to what Mr. Miller just spoke.

16:24:38 From Shannon Bradley to

Hi, I would like to know if those in opposition to having students sit on the task force have recently lived on the graduate student pay? In addition, comments have been made about taking out loans towards the education, and that currently I tried to take out loans for financial relief and I was denied. I am not able to just have a family member cosign on a loan for me, and I want to know if they recommend that I get a loan, will they cosign with me then?

16:25:10 From Bemnet Molla

Ken Miller mentioned that the tuition cost changes for in-state and out-of-state students. But the tuition remission considers every students tuition as in-state.. why is that??

16:26:25 From Leonardo Pavanatto

Stipends do not include comprehensive fees, which are quite expensive as well (in fact, they have been growing at a larger rate than what we are paid). Moreover, international students need to pay a lot of money to do an internship on the summer through co-op. That's being penalized for not working for VT during summer, and should end.

16:27:35 From Dylan Powers

Once a graduate student completes classes, after approximately two years, then the students are not costing the university money via classes or tuition. At that point, where is that "tuition remission" going? Does this mean that those students after their second year, who have passed the educational requirements for their program, are deserving of less pay, if that "tuition remission" is considered to be included in the graduate students' "compensation packages"?

16:27:50 From Damien P. Williams (He/Him)

Scare-quotes because "20 hours" can translate to an actual count of 60+ for some students, especially when lab work is expected.

16:28:23 From Julia Armstrong

Thank you, Carla. This is embarrassing to witness, thank you for your support.

16:28:39 From Damien P. Williams (He/Him)

Thank you very much Carla Finkelstein

16:29:06 From Xiaoying Li

Good

16:29:15 From Alison Ritz

THANK YOU CARLA!!!!

16:30:43 From Mohammad Khorrami

Could you please ask about Comprehensive Fees? why we should pay for them?

16:32:07 From Dylan Powers

Additionally, as mentioned, the health insurance is not comprehensive. Vision and dental is not included, and I still must pay for the service. You cannot say that it is included in the compensation of graduate students when it is objectively not included in our compensation. We must still enroll and pay for the insurance coverage.

16:32:21 From Satoru Emori

From faculty's point of view, what Prof. Finklestein said just about sums it up. We cannot carry out high-quality, competitive scholarly work when many of our graduate students are having food insecurity.

16:36:20 From Damien P. Williams (He/Him)

The benefit to hiring graduate students, beyond the moral imperative, remains the wider availability of graduate students, as a body of people familiar with both the labs and campus.

16:36:33 From Julia Armstrong

Do you not understand how much of an investment in our country's future this is? Investing money in grad students means more local revenue generation and more educated members of a future workforce.

16:36:48 From Derya Ipek Eroglu

Also, I think with this mentality, Young Kim should be at a teaching institution instead of an R1 institution. A graduate student's value cannot be measured by the money paid.

16:37:17 From Bemnet Molla

If tuition remission is an expense to the university, who is paying who and how can whoever is paying agree to have a standard that anyone on assistantship is considered in-state for tuition cost?

16:42:29 From Ashley Dayer

I would like to add a written comment: As a faculty member and the Faculty Senator from the Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation, I am in support of the creation of a Taskforce for a Living Wage. Our Department discussed living wages for graduate students at our faculty meeting this morning. While all of our students receive an assistanship amount higher than the mean for the university, the consensus among our faculty was that our student should be closer to the living wage. We also discussed how the MIT living wage might be a better benchmark to strive towards. <https://livingwage.mit.edu/counties/51121> This would be closer to \$31,200. I would like to ask why this isn't being used as the amount for discussion?

16:42:55 From Maruf Hoque

for the Cost of Living Report (I'm the author): the goal was to analyze expenses then compare the expenses to the dept/program average stipend

16:43:04 From Emily Keeble (she/her)

I just want to add a comment that I'm an international student who has been living in London prior to moving here. the rents, if I wanted to have the privilege of living alone as a human who is nearly 30, in Blacksburg are comparable to one of the most expensive cities in the world. The job I had in London was not anything with exceptional pay by any means. I am SIGNIFICANTLY worse off here than I ever was in London. Any savings I had will be completely gone by the end of my time here, even living with roommates. I am not legally allowed to get a job.

I recognise the university wants to keep all the money at the top by using underpaid graduate students with no training to teach subjects they have never studied to paying undergrads, but those graduate students would really love to eat too. I apologise for my tone with that last sentence, but this really is a case of my not being sure if I'm actually going to survive my PhD.

Comments received via email at the conclusion of the meeting:

From Evan Lavender-Smith

I serve on University Council and the Faculty Senate Cabinet as representative for the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences. I have not heard from a single person among my constituency in the Senate who opposes the idea of providing a living wage to VT graduate students. I have only heard of support for it. I also support it. I believe that providing more funding to our graduate students — as well as growing the number of our graduate students — is in the best interest of CLAHS and Virginia Tech. I sincerely hope that the UC and the CGPS&P can work together to make this happen. A living wage for our graduate students is a moral imperative.

From David Bruce

Some of the comments from council members were a bit tone deaf to the conversation being had during the discussion centered around the Living Wage Resolution. These comments indicate the need for grad students to be a powerful voice in any task force addressing the resolution as it may encounter some poorly reasoned initial reactions from some council members.

From Jane Abbate

As a senior faculty member, I want to strongly express my support for the Resolution to Institute a Living Wage for Graduate Students, to be discussed on February 21. I have observed our graduate students performing their teaching and research responsibilities at the highest professional level; they fully deserve a living wage. Moreover, providing a living wage to our student-employees is the very least we can do to live up to the values the University professes to uphold.

In addition, I support fair representation of graduate students on task forces that centrally concern their interests, as stated in the Resolution to Establish a University Policy Governing Task Forces and Working Groups (GPSS Resolution 2021-2022A). The absence of these key stakeholders is a recipe for bad policy. The graduate students have put in the work to understand the issues at stake and have demonstrated a mature and measured approach to resolving them.

From Ashley Shew

I have been chagrined as a faculty member and former Faculty Senate Representative to see the statement from the Faculty Senate Cabinet on the GPSS Living Wage Resolution, and even more disappointed in some of my colleagues for the way they are treating our graduate student colleagues. At no point was Faculty Senate consulted about the Response that Faculty Senate President Weiss has offered on our behalf. The one time senators were told (not consulted) about upcoming GPSS resolutions, it was to update us that cabinet was responding to these: at that time, senators asked for more information, and many had favorable opinions of the Task Force Resolution, which Prof. Weiss references in his Living Wage response, and on which he and his cabinet offered another negative response without consulting Faculty Senate. The lack of transparency around Faculty Senate Cabinet's decisions would be disappointing on a normal day, but alarming in the context of the important business at hand in the GPSS Living Wage Resolution.

In talking with faculty across several colleges, many of us are strongly in favor of the creation of the Living Wage Task Force and would love to see commitment to stakeholders and follow-through represented in this resolution. I would hate for Prof. Weiss's opinion to be taken to be representative of faculty. Many of us want to see our students paid fairly, and we recognize that a living wage would be an excellent recruiting and retention tool for top-notch graduate students. We also recognize that outside gigs, food insecurity, hardships set back students in time to degree, and cause them greater stress along the way too. We lose good students this way, and burn others out.

What the GPSS has put together in this resolution represents important data-gathering that I know they've worked years on, as well as a commitment to relevant stakeholders and the prudent use of a task force to study a situation toward practical implementation.

List of Guests for the February 7, 2022, University Council meeting

Gaoshan Li	Ariel Heminger
Gates Palissery	Kait Malewicz
Laura Iancu	Sohair ElMeligy
Kari Evans	Rebecca Heth
Roan Parrish	Steve Walsh
Laura Gil Pineda	Homa Karimi
Haley Michel	Aidan Bradley
Owen Turner	Madelyn Toman
Justin Dubik	Katelyn Singer
Mohammed El Kihal	Paras Patel
Dominic Gallegos	Aileen Suarez
Holly Funkhouser	Molly Domino
Jon A. LLOYD	Alison Ritz
Hannah R Gignoux	Zachary Hutelin
Maria Alejandra Segura	Nusrat Jahan
Tori Engler	Savannah Mandel
Andrew Alexander	Darcy Davidson
Thomas Bustamante	Luisa M Havens Gerardo
William Stone	Lauren Maynard
Danielle Porier	Alaina Weinheimer
Rachael Green	Isaac Pressgrove
Katey Slack	Caroline Begley
Tommy Lam	Lisley Pereira Gomes
Zach Hutelin	Brian Bennett
Abby Lewis	Matt DeJager
Erin Milligan	Kelly Graff
Ben Beiter	Vance Nepomuceno
Sophie Drew	Faika Tahir Jan
Riley DeHority	Caitlin Miller
Caro Vela	David Millican
Kehleyr Thai	Tristan Anderson
Jatia Mills	Amilia Evans
Shreya Choudhary	Isaiah Jordan
Maruf Hoque	Xakin Ramirez Isunza
Nic Bone	Shannon Bradley
Bailey Howell	Eleanor Lane
Alyssa David	Dexter Howard
Katelyn Singer	Lauren Kerwien
Jared Conner	Amber Wendler
Bela Gnasso	Jonathan Briganti
Suzanne Laliberte	Isaiah Jordan
Aran Garnett-Deakin	Momiji Barlow
Andre Jones Jr.	Tharindu Damesha Rajapaksha
Jacob Valente	Kalani Ellepola
JoAnna Platzer	Camilo Alfonso

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Daniel Putnam	Christine Labuski
Julia Montgomery	Emalee Money
Kenneth Distefano	Larissa Schneider
Ellen Plummer	Molly Parker
Darby McPhail	Rick Sparks
Anyelina Mangru	Sara Cathey
Cassie Becker	Michael Holden
Reed Byg	Jesse Janoski
Andre Jones Jr	Mary King
Elliott Kunke	Alfred Agbekudzi
Mecaila McClune	Lee Vinsel
Casey Gregory	Christian Runyon
Francesca Battista	Claudia Perez
William Snyder	Brittney Antous
Taylor Loy	Leonard Ohenhen
Tara Frank	Christina Wheeler
Brian Kohler	Kayla Farrell
Ashleigh Hillen	Audra Barnes
Taylor McFadden	Kathryn Ratliff
Aaron Brock	Joshua Detwiler
Courtney Walls	Panagiotis Anastasiou
Steven Barnett	Hannah Glisson
Benjamin Miller	Madison Pinko
Daniel Valmassei	Michael Wagnon
Caroline Begley	Warren Geither
Yulun Li	Parul Sharma
Ertugrul Baris Ondes	Sarah Power
Amelia Loeb	Isaac VanDiest
Collin Gregg	Samuel Beckenhauer
Timothy Calhoun	Julie Armstrong
Prashasti Agarwal	Cairen Miranda
Whitney Woelmer	Debbie Greer
Kerry Gendreau	Khanh To
Cameron Lockett	Gabriel Costa Borba
Sapana pokhrel	Megan Evas
Liev Birman	Katie Wardinski
Sonal Jha	David Blankenship
Jeremy Decker	Victor Lopez
Xin Zhang	Kristen Bretz
Elizabeth Curtiss	Avi Seth
Rachel Maizel	Larry Luster
Rachel Holloway	Angel Collins
Caleb Gore	Kandace Donaldson
Dhritiman Barman	Omotayo Oladele
Jennifer Kirsch	Sally Shupe

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Fernanda Vasquez-Valverde	Monika Gibson
Raymundo Hernandez	Noah Lyons
Mohannad Ismail	Aidan W. Murphy
Jasmine Johnson	Ada Warren
Kaiser Arndt	Mathirush Subramonia Pillai
Lakshmi Miller	Danna Agmon
Iliana Castillo	Sophia Vicente
Soni Ghimire	Emily Kim
Linea Cutter	Kit Friedman
Dylan G Powers	Maria Erazo
Liora O'Donnell Goldensher	Cris Thompson
Amy Nelson	Christian Heasley
Amanda Hensley	Garrett Harrison
David Bruce	Arinjoy Basak
Seohyun Park	Keaton Unroe
Kaustubh Deshmukh	Marissa Langager
Katrina Colucci	Jackie Zhu
Mary C Frazier	Troy Jaisohn Kim
Ashley Reed	Paige Van de Vuurst
Chuen Hei Chan	Jazmin Jurkiewicz
Landon Bilyeu	Jenna Catalano
Joanna Reinhold	Rachana Deven Somaiya
Stephen Plont	Basit Muhammad Imran
Cecelia Wood	Phil Olson
Julio Arroyo	Danielle Mullins
Jon Clark Teglas	Tsung-Yen Tsou
Frank Wanye	Alina Valop
Chloe Robertson	Bela Haifa Khairunisa
Catherine Grimes	Ocqua Gerlyn Murrell
Megan Moran	Aimane Najmeddine
Ipek Eroglu	Colin Kelly
Mychala Snead	Ami Schulte
Gavin Vess	Khadijah Al Safwan
John Barbish	Houston Chandler
Angel Collins	Daniel Smith
Naga Nitish Chamala	Sandeep K Jada
Ian Hines	Johanna Arredondo
Elizabeth Chishimba	Elizabeth Shupe
Amanda Burroughs	Marcela Johnson
Amy Ernestes	Dana Hawley
Emma Bueren	Cole Bristow
Carlo Canezo	Adam Masters
Sarah Aadahl	Ndidi Eyegheleme
Alayna Graves	Kelsey Reed
Ritish Shailly	Whitley Johnson

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Clint Lanham	Yuanqi Liu
Amolpreet Kaur Saini	Haylee Downey
Dhruv Apte	Caiti-Erin Talty
Taylor Fossett	Uwe C. Tauber
Morva Saaty	Jiangtao Li
Philip Ray	Robert Andrew Gustafson
Kayla Kester	Noushin Omidvar
Chelsea Buhler	William Jordan
Jungsoo Park	Kathryn (Addie) Hayes
Ben Thomas	Akshay Dahiya
Noor Tasnim	Damien P. Williams
Melanie Hempel	Zuleka Woods
Earl Gilbert	Caitlin Cridland
Jessica DePaolis	Jimmy Kaindu
Bradley Gobin	Michael Hendrickson
Cory Ilo	Leah Ramnath
Minh Vu	Angie De Soto
Karim Youssef	Paul J Risteca
Nazanin Sedaghatkish	Liqian Niu
Amanda Hashimoto	Breana Turner
Joseph Taylor	Ashley Dayer
Kaustubh Deshmukh	Dhiraj Srivastava
Joshua M. Rady	Jonathan Charleston
Chirag Gupta	Shashank Karki
Shakiba Davari	Luke Goodman
Erik Akbar	Caroline de Jager
Lauren Fritsch	Sara Richards
Brian Felipe Keith Norambuena	Shaghayegh Valajan Navabpour
Awake Khobragade	Andrea Schuman
Nicholas Wege Dias	Amirah Wright
Carlos Saint-Preux	Gokce Onen
Ibrahim Tahmid	Collen Young
Holly Kindsvater	Cyril Ayuk
Tung Xuan Le	Peter Gioia
Marcel Shams Eddin	Puspa Kamal Poudel
Christian Heryakusuma	Luther McPherson
Sahaj Jain	Sonal Jha
Kregg Quarles	Morgan Wilson
Mitra Bagheri	Martin Etemadi
Srijeet Halder	Darshit Patel
Pouyan Shirzadian	Jose Marc Madriaga
Amber Kelly	Elham Mohammadrezaei
Alex Fuge	Michael Teater
Ryley C Harris	Emily Keeble
Saeid Alimoradi	Parisa Farzeen

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Annie Dubner	Upali Bhattacharya
Haoyu Wang	Elham Mohammadrezaei
Katherinna Marhoefer	Connor Herron
Sydney Johnson	Eman Abdelrahman
Nila Masrourisaadat	Eileen Herbers
Mikel Cawley	Linea Cutter
Renesa Tarannum	Madison Pinko
Katherine Gorman	Meha Setiya
Betty Wilkins	Natalia Varela
Ankith Mohan	Ahmad Tourei
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Umme Fatema Piu	Megan Bronson
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Jesse Garrett-Larsen	Saeed Behzadinasab
Chinmay Katke	Frances Bennett Clark
Roghaiyeh Ansari	Jacob Robinson
Quyên Do	Carla López Lloreda
Catherine Freed	Arash Sarshar
Puspa Kamal Poudel	Alexander Miele
Rachel Bianculli	Ramin Safavinejad
Jeremy Myslowski	Niloufar Amiri
Alexander Sandercock	Theresa Libera
Nick Copeland	Saman Mohsenirad
Ayuk Cyril	Sshleigh Hillen
Bikun Li	Saeed Sakhdari
Meredith Martinez	Melissa Burt
Lois Kwane Kyei	Grace O'Malley
Neslihan Genckal	Brian Ruether
Irem Sezer	Nicole Nunoo
Charles Sterling	Vishvendra Rustagi
Ezgi Kucukdeger	Nathan Folta
Zachary Benmamoun	Eileen Herbers
Xin Zhang	Xiaoying Li
Carmen Gitre	An Chi-He
Satoru Emori	Nandini Das
Geoffrey Omondi Otieno	Zarley Rebholz
Oziomachukwu Chinaka	Faisal Adams
Mohammad Khorrami	Taizoon Chunawala
Mehmet Yardimci	Arinjoy Basak
London Russell	Theresa Libera
Amaryah Armstrong	
Daniel Keku	
Justin Kleiber	
Sarah Healy	
Elliana Vickers	