WHEREAS, the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) has been shown to be a discriminatory and ineffective examination for selecting qualified graduate students, as shown in Appendix 1; and

WHEREAS, the GRE shrinks Virginia Tech’s talent pool for graduate students and perpetuates the marginalization of many graduate students who may not have access to the test for any number of reasons; and

WHEREAS, the GRE, as an expensive exam costing in excess of $205 and an additional $27 for each individual university to which scores are sent, creates an undue financial burden on many qualified, aspiring graduate students with little to no benefit in most cases; and

WHEREAS, several peer institutions, such as Virginia State University, have removed the GRE altogether and many more individual programs across the country and within Virginia Tech (see Appendix 2) have already recognized these problems and have elected to not require the GRE; and

WHEREAS, the graduate school of Virginia Tech does not require the GRE for its application process and as such there are no legal or institutional policy barriers to removing its requirement; and
WHEREAS, we recognize that some departments might find the GRE or GRE subject test useful for their decision making so we want preserve the ability to require it, but only after the department provides detailed justification as to its utility; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the use of the GRE or GRE subject test will require departments to justify this decision, in writing, to the Graduate School per the implementation plan set forth in Appendix 3. The Graduate School will be responsible for maintaining compliance with this policy and requiring an opt-in process for departments to utilize the GRE as an admissions metric.

Appendix 1: Article demonstrating evidence in support of the resolution

There has been a wealth of research on how standardized tests in general and the GRE specifically are discriminatory towards traditionally marginalized students. Below we submit one such article that demonstrates this fact for consideration because it is emblematic of the research as a whole. Additionally, it provides a nice, quick review of the literature on the topic.

Link: https://www.nature.com/articles/nj7504-303a

Citation: Miller, C., Stassun, K. A test that fails. Nature 510, 303–304 (2014). https://doi.org/10.1038/nj7504-303a

Appendix 2: list of graduate programs and their GRE requirements
Appendix 3: Process for submitting justification for use of GRE in screening potential graduate students

The process for submitting justification for the GRE will be decided by the Director of Admissions for the Graduate School in conjunction with their Northern Virginia counterpart. They will develop a form that departments can fill out as well as the criterion by which the GRE is an acceptable entry document. The Commission on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policies (CGPSP) will work under the director to develop these documents and procedures as well as establish best practices. The goal of this process is to develop best practices for departments to justify their use of the test if they choose to use it and to make the university norm not requiring the GRE and instead taking a more holistic approach to graduate admissions.

These guidelines should be developed by academic year 2022-2023 and implemented prior to the start of academic year 2023-2024. This resolution should be treated as the first step in reevaluating the graduate admissions process for its racial, class, gender, and disability politics to make it as inclusive and just as possible. Further, we should begin to examine undergraduate admissions processes and the discriminatory nature of other standardized admissions tests, such as the SAT, to become a more equitable institution.