



Graduate and Professional Student Senate
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**Graduate and Professional Student Senate
 GPSS Resolution 2021-22J**

Resolution to Expand Protections for International Students and Establish a Bridge Fund

First Reading by GPSS:	Sept. 9th, 2021
Second Reading by GPSS:	Sept 23rd, 2021
First Reading by Commission	date
Staff Senate Review:	date
Faculty Senate Review:	date
Undergraduate Student Senate Review:	date
Approved by Commission	date
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, Virginia Tech is committed to non-discrimination of members of the Virginia Tech community, privacy, and providing protection to the members of the Virginia Tech community under the law; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Tech affirms and celebrates the diversity and values that international students and members of their communities add to Virginia Tech; and

WHEREAS, international students are not granted the same level of protections that domestic students are given; and

WHEREAS, this was made clear during the Trump presidency when international students from Muslim majority countries were specifically targeted for retribution and made precarious (see Appendix 1); and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has not only limited travel between countries, putting international students at risk, it has also proliferated hate crimes against Asian students in our community causing racial harm; and

WHEREAS, documented students have a limited amount of time between graduation and/or leaving the university to find a job, which creates unique challenges and financial insecurities; and

WHEREAS, having a financial safety net would be helpful in ameliorating many of these issues resulting from fiscal precarity; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that a bridge fund is created specifically to serve as a flexible safety net for those international students whose contracts fall through or who otherwise need financial support to continue prospering at Virginia Tech. This bridge fund will be managed by a relevant office, work closely with Cranwell to ensure international student's needs are met, and will operate by procedures they internally develop in conjunction with the international student community; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the university establish a working group to develop concrete policies to protect students from changes in federal and state administrations that put international students at risk and that we do what we can within the extent of the law to shield our international students from political retaliation and racial violence. This should be done in cooperation with both undocumented and documented international students who will comprise the stakeholder portion (see: GPSS 2021-2022A) of any working groups formed should this resolution be accepted. This working group should regularly evaluate Virginia Tech's policies and make recommendations for how to best secure the flourishing of our international student community regardless of their documentation status.

Appendix 1: Threats to International Students

How Trump's travel ban hurt Muslim students specifically:

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/trumps-travel-ban-leaves-students-stranded-and-colleges-scrambling-to-help/>

How Trump's rhetoric hurt immigrants in schools:

<https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2017/trump-effect>

And furthermore how Trump stoked White Supremacist resentment of Immigrants:

<https://www.splcenter.org/20170427/100-days-trumps-america> and

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/18/white-nationalist-hate-groups-southern-poverty-law-center>

Anti-Asian hate and the COVID-19 pandemic:

- <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32837171/>
- <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32837158/>
- <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34092991/>
- <http://signsjournal.org/covid/chen/>

Community Responses: <https://vtx.vt.edu/articles/2021/04/unirel-APIIDA-townhall-2021.html> and https://www.inclusive.vt.edu/index/VT_UCOR.html#select=4