



Graduate and Professional Student Senate  
 (GPSS)  
 25 Graduate Life Center (0186)  
 Blacksburg, VA 24061  
 Email: [gsa@vt.edu](mailto:gsa@vt.edu)  
[gsa.vt.edu](http://gsa.vt.edu)



**Graduate and Professional Student Senate  
 GPSS Resolution 2021-22G  
 Resolution to Secure Equitable Funding for Cultural and Community Centers**

First Reading by GPSS:	date
Second Reading by GPSS:	date
Staff Senate Review:	date
Faculty Senate Review:	date
Undergraduate Student Senate Review:	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**, the Cultural and Community Centers (CCCs) are an important part of the Virginia Tech community and moreover are absolutely essential to fulfilling the principles of community Virginia Tech aspires to; and

**WHEREAS**, Virginia Tech has and continues to fall short when it comes to diversity and equity initiatives (Appendix 1) and while progress has been made, there are still significant issues with undervaluing marginalized members of the community; and

**WHEREAS**, for example, the black student population at Virginia Tech hovers around 4% for undergraduates and graduate students in comparison to roughly 20% of Virginia’s population being black, which represents a fivefold disparity in demographic representation; and

**WHEREAS**, while demographic representation is important, it is only part of the goal of meaningfully supporting underrepresented student populations and serves as a barometer of institutional problems rather than the end-goal of student flourishing and material support; and

**WHEREAS**, The CCCs are a prime example of this, with a high turnover rate for administrators of these organizations due in no small part to a lack of compensation, support, and resources necessary to accomplish their mission; and

**WHEREAS**, students who actively participate in the CCCs are some of the most engaged Hokies on this campus (see their program calendar here: <https://ccc.vt.edu/calendar.html>) but have consistently been disregarded by administrators when raising issues of equity; and

**WHEREAS**, in the last five years, almost every CCC has raised issues to the administrator's attention and expressed dissatisfaction with the result. Most publically, students from the LGBTQ+ resource center, the Asian cultural engagement center, and the Black cultural center have all raised issues concerning the lack of support the CCCs have received and these issues were not addressed; and

**WHEREAS**, the protests in the summer of 2020 garnered university wide support with little meaningful action or reallocation of resources based on what activists on campus have called for; and

**WHEREAS**, evidence supports that the presence of CCCs in higher education promote community bonding, leadership, achievement, and identity development while providing resources and support for challenging damaging hegemonic institutional systems that embody, enforce, and obfuscate lingering traces of colonialism, nationalism, and supremacy. CCCs are invaluable sources of community diversity, strength, resilience, and resistance. They are crucial to achieving VT's core goals of mutual respect and equitability (Appendix 2); and

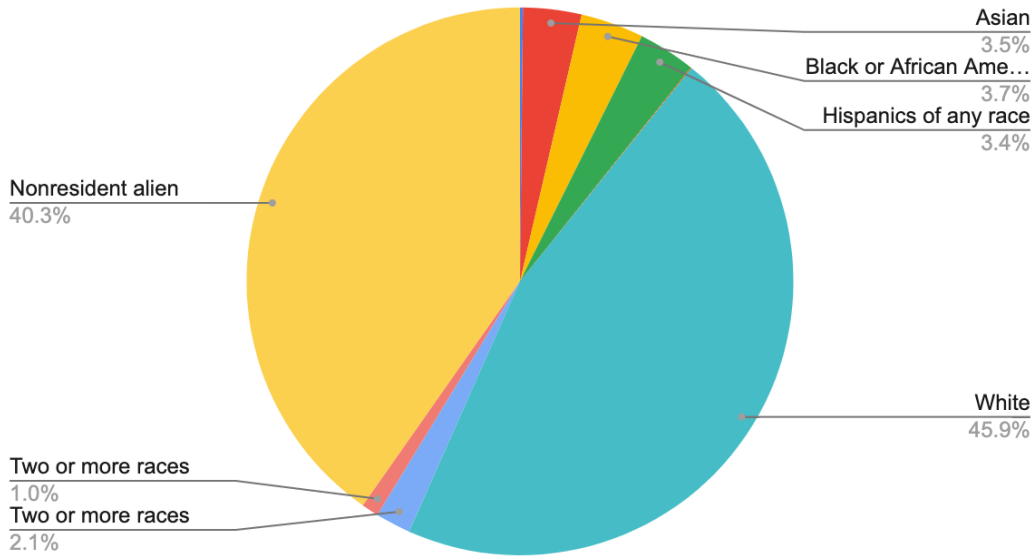
**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the senates who support this resolution call on the administration to make the Cultural and Community Centers a greater financial priority and provide more support and staffing to allow them to accomplish their mission. This should include an immediate stimulus (FY2022-2023) that would provide raises (increase to next pay band) for all staff supporting the CCCs and strong consideration for hiring more staff to facilitate the mission of the CCCs depending on student input; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that we recommend an ongoing working group be established that specifically works to identify resource and staffing needs for the CCCs and prioritize their implementation. This working group would include a significant stakeholder portion made up of dedicated students from across the CCCs whose perspectives will be put front and center in CCC resource allocation decisions.

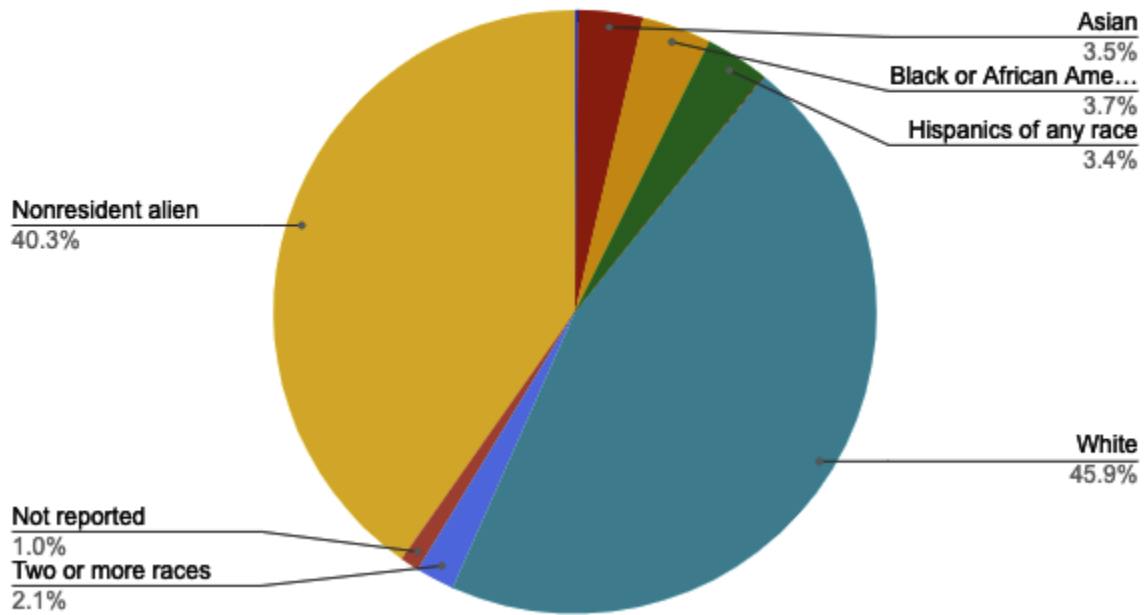
# Appendix 1: Demographics of the University, State of Virginia, and Entire U.S. Population

<https://vt.edu/about/facts-about-virginia-tech/factbook/student-overview.html>

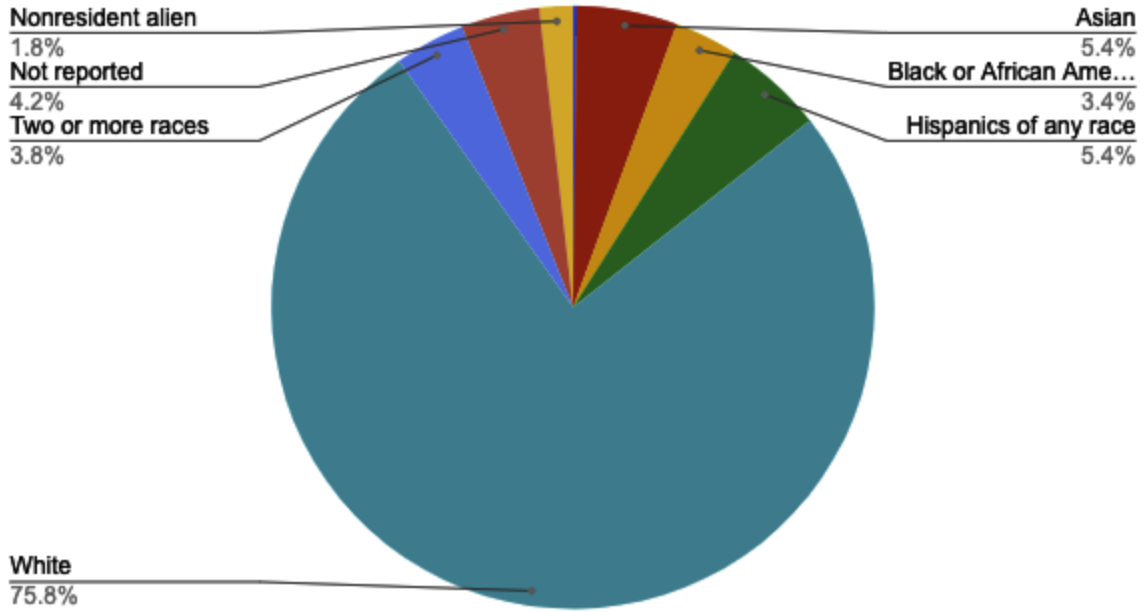
## Graduate



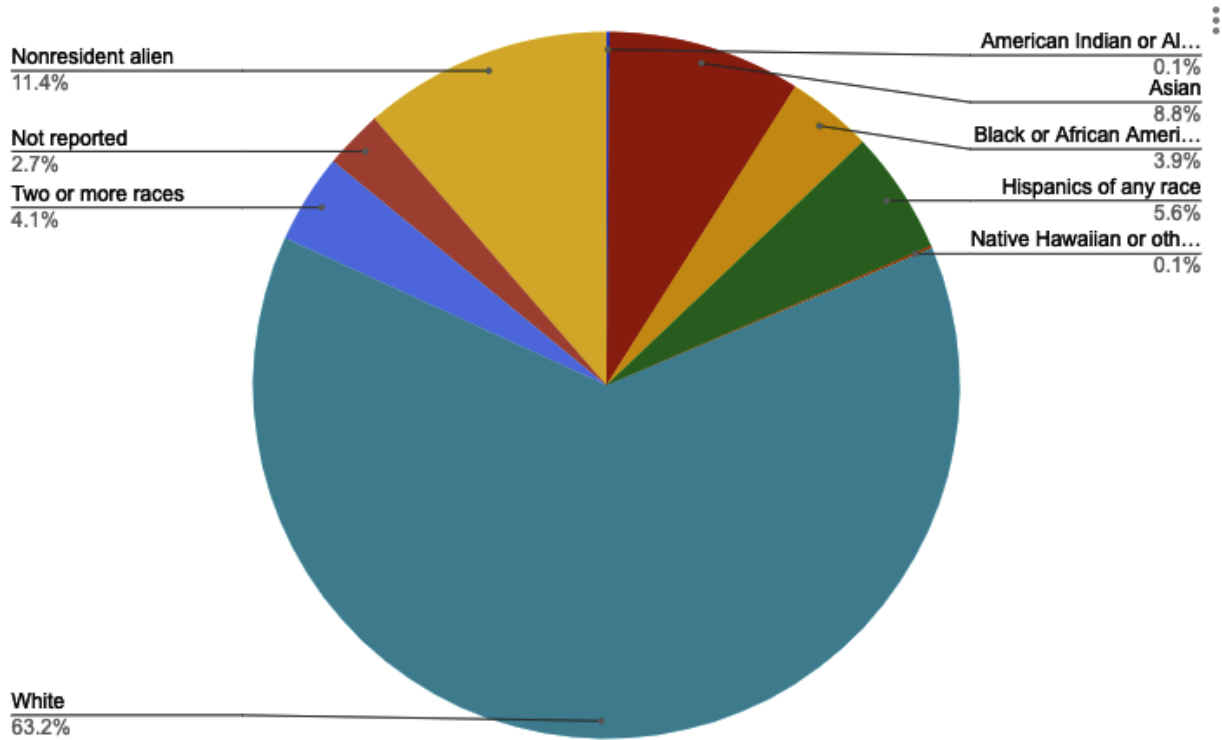
## Graduate



## Professional

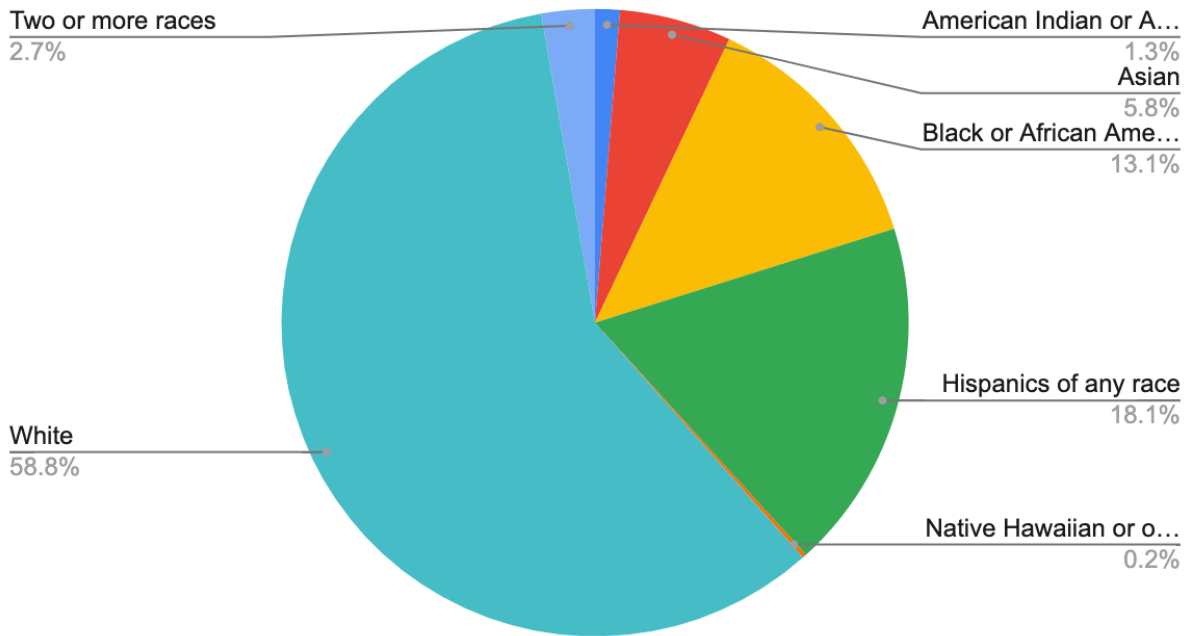


## Total student make up



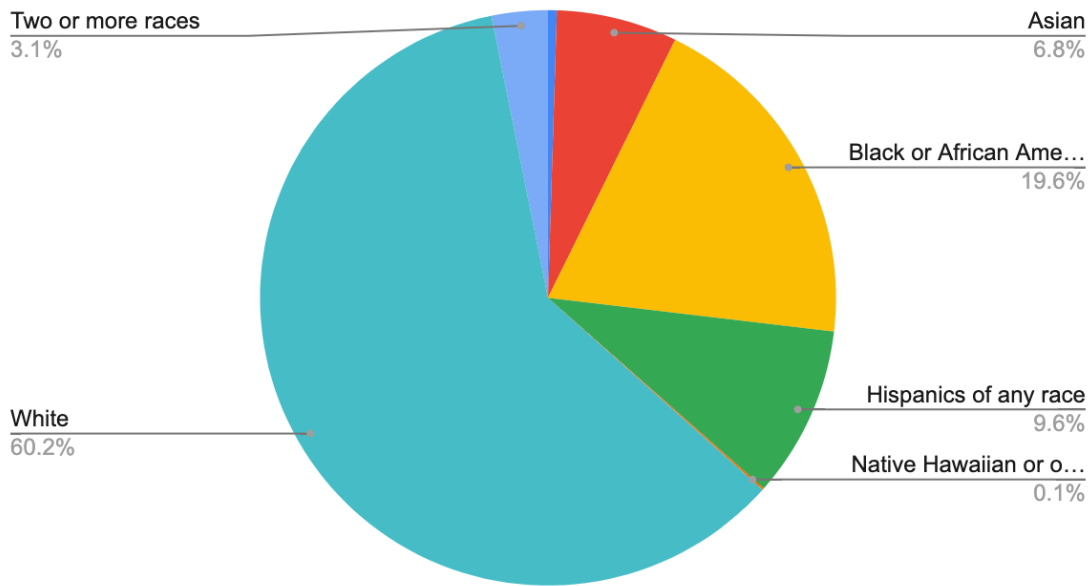
In comparison, the U.S. demographic rates look like:

### US vs. Race



And Virginia demographic rates look like:

### Virginia vs. Race



Link: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/VA,US/PST045219?>

These statistics show a striking disparity in the racial demographics of Virginia Tech and the make-up of our state/country that warrant addressing. While representation is not the same as meaningfully supporting students of color, it does speak to some systemic failings. The cultural and community centers are a key place where we can begin to address this but our recommendation is that we also directly increase funding for black, latin american, Asian, and indigenous students.

## **Appendix 2: Resources for Advancing VT's Diversity Missions**

Patton, L.B. 2010. *Culture Centers in Higher Education: Perspectives on Identity*. Stylus Publishing: Sterling, VA.

Ahmed, Sara. 2012. *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*. Duke University Press: Durham, NC.

Spade, Dean. 2015. *Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law*. 2nd ed. Duke University Press: Durham, NC.