



**Graduate and Professional Student Senate  
GPSS Resolution 2021-22N2  
Resolution to Divest from Carceral Corporations**

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 summer of 2020 saw the largest social movement in United States history cohere around a single, solitary demand: defund the police; and

**WHEREAS**, this demand comes explicitly from the prison abolitionist movement itself part of the longer fight against enslavement. Appendix 1 contains the 8toabolition platform, developed by Black Lives Matters organizers, as well as an article by prominent abolitionist Mariame Kaba since there seems to be some confusion on what defunding the police entails; and

**WHEREAS**, the most recent Black Lives Matter protests are part of a 7 year series of protests against police violence that call on institutions to break ties with mass incarceration as well as an over 200 year history of struggling against slavery; and

**WHEREAS**, many elements of the university have explicitly affirmed the Black Lives Matter movement and voiced their support for it (see Appendix 2); and

**WHEREAS**, students, faculty, and staff have been vocally supportive of Black Lives Matter and its demands long before the 2020 uprisings (see Appendix 2); and

**WHEREAS**, many members of the upper administration have likewise affirmed their support for diversity on campus and pledged to take action in the wake of the Black Lives Matter protests (see Appendix 3) but have failed to comply with the single demand being made by that movement; and

**WHEREAS**, President Tim Sands, Vice-President Menah Pratt-Clarke, and Vice-President Frank Shushok have taken a strong stance on this issue when he said: “Our investment in the legacy of George Floyd must endure through our daily commitment to unravel the deep history and systems of racism in our society, including the role of educational institutions“ which cannot be done without addressing the role of police on campus in a more serious and historically informed way; and

**WHEREAS**, if the administration wants to meaningfully address racial injustice, then the inclusion strategies laid out in the Beyond Boundaries 2047 master plan are insufficient and they should either adopt the demand made by Black activists to defund the police or be honest with the Virginia Tech community that they do not support the Black Lives Matter movement-- there is no neutral position that can be taken; and

**WHEREAS**, while other resolutions address the university’s policies that have a stake in mass incarceration, the financial investments of the Virginia Tech Foundation are another site of university complicity that warrants addressing; and

**WHEREAS**, carceral corporations should be defined as any business that profits from the incarceration of human beings whether they are U.S. citizens or not, which would extend to ICE detention centers, private prison facilities, state and federal prisons, companies that develop technologies that enable incarceration like Predpol, and any corporations that charge for services therein; and

**WHEREAS**, it is currently unclear as to the extent of investment in corporations like the GEO group who profit from mass incarceration and ICE detention centers but it is certain that some level of investment exists in these multi-billion dollar corporations; and

**WHEREAS**, the continued existence of ICE detention centers, private prisons, federal prisons, and other sites of mass incarceration relies on these corporations who exploit incarcerated people for their bottom line and are fundamentally unethical in their business practices; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Virginia Tech administrators and employees who sit on the board of the Virginia Tech Foundation immediately begin divesting all investments from companies that profit from incarceration (broadly construed) and reinvest that money into more ethical businesses such as, but not limited to, businesses led by formerly incarcerated people that do not exploit prison labor. This divestment should be conducted as expeditiously as permissible by law and the Virginia Tech Foundation will release a transparent roadmap to complete divestment to the public within a year of this process beginning, which will include information on how much money is currently invested in carceral corporations, a plan for changing all of it over, and a mechanism of accountability so that the public can check to make sure this has been carried out.

## **Appendix 1: What is Defunding the Police?**

[8toAbolition platform](https://www.8toabolition.com/): <https://www.8toabolition.com/>

[8toAbolition demand to remove police from schools](https://www.8toabolition.com/remove-police-from-schools):  
<https://www.8toabolition.com/remove-police-from-schools>

[Mariame Kaba's article on defunding the police](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/12/opinion/sunday/floyd-abolish-defund-police.html):  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/12/opinion/sunday/floyd-abolish-defund-police.html>

See, also, resources in GPSS Resolutions 2021-2022D1 and 2021-2022L for more historical context for what defunding the police means.

## **Appendix 2: Statements of Support for Black Lives Matter**

Statements from: OID, CCC, UJIMA, SOAR; University, Provost, VTCSOM, CALS, CLAHS, CNRE, COS, LGBT Caucus, JSU, Libraries, BEAM, Athletics, OVPRI, CAUS, Moss Arts Center, Advancement, Women's Center, AASU, OIA, Grad School, COE, PCOB, HR, Faculty Senate, VP Finance, VCE, Women's Alliance and Caucus, History, VA-MD CVM, Hokie PRIDE, Black Caucus, Library Employees, I.T.Diversity Committee, BSE, AIICC, and CIRED  
[https://www.inclusive.vt.edu/index/VT\\_UCOR.html](https://www.inclusive.vt.edu/index/VT_UCOR.html)

Students, faculty, and staff have consistently organized and participated in BLM protests, which also affirms the movement and its demand. For example, see these articles on Two Die-In Protests- the 2020 Blacksburg protest and the 2014 Justice for Freddie Gray Protest:

[http://www.collegiatetimes.com/gallery/vigil-and-die-in-reflection-for-those-killed-by-police/collect ion\\_7ceb4e1c-a8ca-11ea-b693-bbe5216adcf8.html](http://www.collegiatetimes.com/gallery/vigil-and-die-in-reflection-for-those-killed-by-police/collect ion_7ceb4e1c-a8ca-11ea-b693-bbe5216adcf8.html)

[http://www.collegiatetimes.com/news/coalition-for-justice-naacp-at-virginia-tech-host-justice-for-freddie-gray-rally/article\\_9573956e-eeedc-11e4-a331-3b313e5fa6b9.html](http://www.collegiatetimes.com/news/coalition-for-justice-naacp-at-virginia-tech-host-justice-for-freddie-gray-rally/article_9573956e-eeedc-11e4-a331-3b313e5fa6b9.html)

## **Appendix 3: Upper Administration Statements of Support**

[Joint Statement by Tim Sands and Menah Pratt-Clarke](https://vtx.vt.edu/articles/2020/05/president-inclusivevt-statement-may31.html)-  
<https://vtx.vt.edu/articles/2020/05/president-inclusivevt-statement-may31.html>

[Joint Statement by Tim Sands, Menah Pratt-Clarke, and Frank Shushok](https://vtx.vt.edu/articles/2021/04/president-message-042121.html&sa=D&source=editors&ust=1629384867881000&usg=AOvVaw3tlkjkjCglaF820IJ88-_d)-  
[https://vtx.vt.edu/articles/2021/04/president-message-042121.html&sa=D&source=editors&ust=1629384867881000&usg=AOvVaw3tlkjkjCglaF820IJ88-\\_d](https://vtx.vt.edu/articles/2021/04/president-message-042121.html&sa=D&source=editors&ust=1629384867881000&usg=AOvVaw3tlkjkjCglaF820IJ88-_d)