



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



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

Resolution to Establish Virginia Tech as a Sanctuary Campus and Expand Protections for Undocumented Students

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 all students grant the university, regardless of residency status; and

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

WHEREAS, Virginia Tech recognizes that there has been an increasing number of ICE raids and divisive police tactics on undocumented communities (see Appendix 1); and

WHEREAS, undocumented students miss school and work for fear of deportation and often do not report crimes because they fear deportation; and

WHEREAS, in a letter to President Timothy Sands (see Appendix 2), students have expressed their desires to have Virginia Tech offer protections to undocumented and international students in the form of creating a sanctuary campus; and

WHEREAS, a large number of universities, colleges, cities, and towns in the United States have become sanctuary campuses and offered sanctuary to undocumented students; and

WHEREAS, ICE employees recognize the potential risks in detaining and deporting college students and has put out internal memos discouraging it (Appendix 3); and

WHEREAS, changing federal administrations and ICE leadership means that there is an inconsistent and uncertain implementation of protections and we are calling for more stable and consistent protections for undocumented students; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Virginia Tech becomes designated a sanctuary campus that will offer stable and consistent protection to undocumented (and documented) international students by not cooperating with ICE in deporting any member of our community in any capacity permitted by law. Additionally, the university will not recruit employees for ICE or distribute any recruiting materials, will not invite ICE agents into classrooms or campus buildings under any context, and will similarly not distribute recruitment materials for companies that work closely with ICE. Additionally, this resolution supports the work proposed in GPSS 2021-2022J and seeks to expand protections for all international students by ensuring that undocumented students are shielded regardless of threats from federal, state, or local officials who might jeopardize their education at Virginia Tech.

Appendix 1: Proliferation of ICE Raids

<https://www.nilc.org/issues/workersrights/worksites-raids/>

<https://www.immigrantdefenseproject.org/raids/>

<https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2020/09/10002503/ice-raids-la-new-york-texas-covid-19-increase>

Appendix 2: Letter Calling for Sanctuary Campus Status

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSddynwsc0e-wVFpT2TPSFzxFb3CSeCh0pS05eYtVv4clXeBQ/viewform?c=0&w=1>

In addition to this, several faculty members work specifically on the college experience of undocumented students and offer valuable insight on how to better support them. See:

- Ovink, Sarah M. 2014. "‘They Always Call Me an Investment:’ Gender and Latino/a College Pathways." *Gender and Society* 28(2): 265-88.
- Ovink, Sarah M. and Demetra Kalogrides. 2015. "No Place Like Home? Familism and Latino/a-White Differences in College Pathways." *Social Science Research*, Volume 52:219-235. Available online: <http://authors.elsevier.com/a/1Qb5n.17Ro8eCV>

Additionally, Virginia Tech has developed the Center for Refugee, Migrant, and Displacement Studies that further investigates the higher education experiences of undocumented and immigrant students. Their political expertise is also valuable for ensuring that we are ethical in our protections for students, link:

<https://liberalarts.vt.edu/news/articles/2020/12/crmds-2020.html>

The Chronicle of Higher Education also has considered how we can support undocumented schools on numerous occasions, including discussions of sanctuary campus status. See: <https://www.chronicle.com/article/could-colleges-become-sanctuaries-for-undocumented-immigrants/> for just one example among many.

Appendix 3: ICE internal documents

<https://www.ice.gov/doclib/ero-outreach/pdf/10029.2-policy.pdf>

<https://www.ice.gov/doclib/secure-communities/pdf/prosecutorial-discretion-memo.pdf>

These two documents internal to ICE demonstrate some of the recognized risks with detaining and deporting undocumented college students. However, this should not be taken as evidence that ICE is effective at self-management because this is subject to change depending on administration and they will often ignore these best practices.

While not directly applicable, this famous example of ICE setting up a fake university to entrap undocumented college students demonstrates the necessity for establishing Virginia Tech as a sanctuary campus to protect students:

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/2019/11/27/ice-set-up-fake-university-then-arrested-people-it-gave-student-visas/>

Furthermore, this article details some fears about rescinding protections and demonstrates why expanding protections is crucial:

<https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2017/01/sanctuary-campus-college-dreamers-deportation/>