



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

Resolution to Clarify and Expand Parental Leave Policies, Childcare Services, and Family Insurance Plans

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, parental leave eligibility criteria are unclear for graduate students; and

WHEREAS, 8 weeks (320 hours) of parental leave is offered to faculty and staff (<https://www.hr.vt.edu/benefits/leave.html>) per state law but is not available for graduate students; and

WHEREAS, there is currently a Work-Life Grant program (<https://graduateschool.vt.edu/funding/funding-information-for-departments/work-life-grants.htm>) for graduate students to apply for 6 weeks of leave, which, while good start, is insufficient for addressing graduate student needs and more robust measures are required; and

WHEREAS, current parental leave criteria require employees to have worked twelve consecutive months and 1,250 hours in the previous 12-months to be eligible; and

WHEREAS, even if graduate students were able to access parental leave offered to faculty and staff, many graduate students do not meet the above criteria because they sign twenty hours per week, nine month contracts; and

WHEREAS, in addition to these shortcomings in parental leave, there are also issues with eligibility criterion and resourcing for childcare once graduate students return from parental leave; and

WHEREAS, childcare service availability is ambiguous with Little Hokie Hangout Cooperative Play Group limited in the number of applications it can accept, and does not provide child care for children under 20 months (see Appendix 1); and

WHEREAS, graduate student parents are often unaware of their eligibility because of aforementioned constraints or even the existence of the Little Hokie Hangout Cooperative Play Group, managed by the graduate school; and

WHEREAS, Little Hokie Hangout Cooperative Play Group's hours of operation are limited to 8:30 a.m. through 6 p.m., excluding graduate students who need childcare after 6 p.m because graduate student coursework is typically in the evenings; and

WHEREAS, there is a substantial financial burden for graduate students whose children are on the health insurance provided by Virginia Tech (see Appendix 2); and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that parental leave eligibility be expanded to include all Virginia Tech graduate students and staff members who were previously excluded from eligibility, eligibility criteria be clarified and simplified, we should immediately amend criteria for eligibility to exempt graduate students from minimum work requirements necessary to access the program, we should expand the program to include child-care services for infants, and eligibility should be broadly advertised to graduate students and staff; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that funding for Little Hokie Hangout Cooperative Play Group be increased so that the group can expand hours and accept more applicants in light of the changing policies. Furthermore, we should use this opportunity to reevaluate the amount of parental leave we afford to people and work on expanding it for all members of the Virginia Tech community. These changes to eligibility policy and procedure will take effect by the 2022-23 academic year with the fiscal changes evaluated and implemented by the 2023-2024 academic year through the forming of a working group with a diversity of experience.

Appendix 1

<https://graduateschool.vt.edu/student-life/student-services/spouses-partners-and-children/child-care/little-hokies-hangout.html>

Appendix 2

	Rate/Paycheck	Monthly Rate	Annual Rate	% stipend on health insurance*
Student	\$22.29	\$44.58	\$579.54	2.74%
Student + Spouse	\$208.01	\$416.02	\$5,408.26	25.56%
Student + Child	\$208.01	\$416.02	\$5,408.26	25.56%
Student + Spouse + Child	\$393.73	\$787.46	10,236.98	48.38%
Student + 2 Children	\$393.73	\$787.46	10,236.98	48.38%
Student + Spouse + 2 Children	\$579.75	\$1,159.50	15,073.50	71.25%

* Average stipend for all graduate students is \$21,156.69