



Graduate and Professional Student Senate
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**Graduate and Professional Student Senate
 GPSS Resolution 2021-2022D2
 Resolution to Broaden Ethical Oversight for Anti-Immigrant Research Projects**

First Reading by GPSS:	August 26th, 2021
Second Reading by GPSS:	September 9th, 2021
First Reading by COR	date
Staff Senate Review:	date
Faculty Senate Review:	date
Undergraduate Student Senate Review:	date
Approved by COR	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, Immigration, Customs, and Enforcement (ICE) detention centers have been accurately condemned as modern day concentration camps where the human rights of immigrants are neglected (see Appendix 1); and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic revealed the violent treatment of immigrants in these facilities with huge spikes in COVID cases and deaths from other illnesses during the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the vast majority of immigrants in detention centers are forced to flee their home countries because of conditions created by US military intervention in Central America in support of anti-democratic, corrupt and authoritarian governments who have in many cases waged wars against their own populations; economic policies imposed on these countries by the US government and US influenced international institutions that harm the rural poor and destroy the environment; and global warming, which is primarily caused by the Global North and the United States in particular and has had a devastating impact on subsistence production; and

WHEREAS, these detention centers violate Virginia Tech's values including our values as a land-grant university, our principles of community--of which undocumented immigrants are part--and our ethical commitments; and

WHEREAS, these detention centers are upheld by the technology and education Virginia Tech is complicit in developing, with surveillance technologies such as drones / Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) used to detain and deport immigrants at the border. Much of this research is hidden by security clearances through the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Defense and promoted by centers like the Hume Center, which has recruited faculty from ICE, and our drone policing program that creates surveillance applications for drones (see, also: <https://vtx.vt.edu/articles/2020/01/DURIP-Awards-2020.html> although this is not definitive evidence since the research projects are only vaguely defined); and

WHEREAS, the lack of transparency about who is developing anti-immigrant technologies is part of the overarching issues concerning technological development for military applications (addressed additionally by GPSS 2021-2022D1, which provides concrete examples) and is the motivation for requiring a more in-depth audit to ascertain the degree to our involvement in these programs; and

WHEREAS, students and faculty whose expertise is in immigration have called on the university to break ties with ICE, including declining to cooperate with ICE and refusing to enable their detention of immigrants (see Appendix 2); and

WHEREAS, however, it is recognized that not all instances of UAV, algorithmic, surveillance, and biometric research and development are aiding and abetting ICE operations and aims. Accordingly, enhanced scrutiny ought to be leveled at projects focusing on technologies with human subjects and recipients of surveillance and sources of algorithmic data. Further scrutiny should be directed towards projects with fiscal relations to ICE, affiliates such as Skydio, or projects easily appropriated for the purposes of identification, border patrol, immigration, or deportation; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Virginia Tech faculty stop developing technology and educational programs that support ICE staffing, enable ICE detention centers, or develop technologies easily appropriated for border security, and a task force will be charged with auditing our research programs to ensure compliance. The stakeholder portion (see GPSS 2021-2022A) of this task force will *not* be people with national security ties and instead will be made up of undocumented students, the center for migration studies, and critical faculty members with expertise in this area. Additionally, this task force will develop expanded ethical criterion for technological development to prevent further partnerships with ICE or their business partners. This should be accomplished at multiple levels of university oversight because of the severity of the situation and guided by the ethical values demonstrated in the above statements.

Appendix 1: Supporting Evidence

"Civil Rights Groups File Federal Complaint Over Conditions at ICE Detention Center: The filing accuses the Pine Prairie, Louisiana facility of exposing detained people to life-threatening circumstances" by Shani Saxon in Colorlines. July 1, 2021.

<https://www.colorlines.com/articles/civil-rights-groups-file-federal-complaint-over-conditions-ice-detention-center>

"Asylum-seekers, attorneys decry 'horrendous' Louisiana ICE detention center: The Southeast Immigrant Freedom Initiative of Louisiana has written two letters to the Department of Homeland Security over reports of "abuses and inhumane" conditions." by Carmen Sesin in NBC News. June 22, 2021.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/asylum-seekers-attorneys-decry-horrendous-louisiana-ice-detention-cent-rcna1218>

"CBP Defends Conditions At Border Detention Centers Amid Upsurge In Migrants" by Scott Neuman in National Public Radio (NPR) article, March 23, 2021.

<https://www.npr.org/2021/03/23/980290448/cbp-defends-conditions-at-border-detention-centers-amid-upsurge-in-migrants>

"Letters From Ice Detainees Expose Desperate Prison Conditions Amid Coronavirus Pandemic" by Cora Currier in Intercept. July 27, 2020.

<https://theintercept.com/2020/07/27/ice-detention-coronavirus-letters/>

"Ending Forced Labor in ICE Detention Centers: A New Approach" by Jonathan Booth in Georgetown Immigration Law Journal. Vol 34:3, Spring 2020.

<https://www.law.georgetown.edu/immigration-law-journal/ending-forced-labor-in-ice-detention-centers-a-new-approach/>

"What Is Happening at Migrant Detention Centers? Here's What to Know" in Time by Madeleine Joung, July 12, 2019 (Originally published July 10, 2019).

<https://time.com/5623148/migrant-detention-centers-conditions/>

Report, "Management Alert – DHS Needs to Address Dangerous Overcrowding and Prolonged Detention of Children and Adults in the Rio Grande Valley (Redacted)" from the Office of the Inspector General, July 2, 2019: <https://www.oig.dhs.gov/sites/default/fil>

Appendix 2: Letters of Support

For Sanctuary Campus status and against ICE enforcement:

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

See, also, GPSS resolution 2021-2022D1.