

GSA 2020-21-2R: RESOLUTION TO REQUEST ELECTION DAY BE DESIGNATED

A UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY FOR STUDENTS

WHEREAS, the Tuesday following the first Monday in November is designated as Election Day in the United States; and

WHEREAS, federal and/or state candidates are on the ballot every Election Day in Virginia, popularizing the phrase “every year is an election year in Virginia”; and

WHEREAS, following the passage of SB1157 by the state legislature during the 2021 session of the Virginia General Assembly, all municipal elections in Virginia will be held on the Tuesday following the first Monday in November; and

WHEREAS, following the 2020 session of the Virginia General Assembly whereby the state legislature passed, and Governor Ralph Northam signed, legislation to amend and reenact § 2.2-3300 of the Code of Virginia, designating Election Day a state holiday for the right of citizens of a free society to exercise the right to vote; and

WHEREAS, Subsequent to the passage of state legislation, Virginia Tech revised University Policy No. 4315: Guidelines on Holidays, allowing eligible employees to receive paid time off or to earn holiday pay and/or compensatory leave as a result of working on Election Day; and

WHEREAS, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (“Virginia Tech”) is committed to and encourages the practice of *Ut Prosim* (that I may serve); and

WHEREAS, civic engagement, especially through voting for elected leaders, is among the most important ways eligible graduate students at Virginia Tech can exhibit *Ut Prosim*; and

WHEREAS, the free exercise of the right of all citizens to vote, uninhibited by external pressures or obligations is fundamental to democracy; and

WHEREAS, Graduate Students have expressed difficulty in exercising their right to vote on Election Day, often being forced to choose between academic obligations and voting;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Graduate Student Assembly hereby requests Virginia Tech designate Election Day as a University holiday for students; and

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the GSA hereby communicates the actions of this resolution to the Commission on Student Affairs and all other relevant university governing bodies and requests concurrence therein.