

**MINUTES**

**BOARD OF VISITORS PUBLIC COMMENT SESSION  
FOR PROPOSED 2024-25 TUITION AND FEES**

March 26, 2024

In accordance with *Code of Virginia* §23.1-307(E), requiring boards of visitors to hold public comment sessions prior to acting on any proposed increase in undergraduate tuition or mandatory fees, an ad hoc committee of Virginia Tech’s Board of Visitors met in open session on Tuesday, March 26, 2024, in a virtual meeting that was livestreamed for the public on YouTube.

**Present**

Edward H. Baine (Rector)  
David Calhoun (Vice Rector)  
Carrie H. Chenery  
Sandy C. Davis  
Nancy Dye  
Greta J. Harris  
Anna L. James  
L. Chris Petersen  
John Rocovich

Also present were the following: President Timothy Sands, Kim O’Rourke (Secretary to the Board), Cyril Clarke, Al Cooper, Corey Earles, Kay Heidbreder, Tim Hodge, Ken Miller, April Myers, Mark Owczarski, Lori Rose, Lisa Royal, Amy Sebring, and Tracy Vosburgh.

During the public comment session, there were 44 concurrent viewers on YouTube and a total of 23 views.

Speakers: Benjamin Burdick, Riley DeHority, Andrew Gunsch, Pika Madeleine MacDougal, Rachel Maizel, Oliver Shuey, Aileen Suarez, and Prescott Vayda.

Rector Baine called the virtual meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. In accordance with *Code of Virginia* §23.1-307(D), a public notice of the proposed range of increase in tuition and fees was issued on March 8, 2024; the public notice included information about the public comment period. (Copy filed with permanent minutes and marked Attachment A.)

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## **TUITION WORKSHOP**

The meeting began with a 15-minute tuition workshop presented by Amy Sebring, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer. Ms. Sebring's PowerPoint presentation covered affordability and financial aid to Virginia Tech students, student success rates, the level of state support, how state support and tuition revenue are used, and factors influencing tuition development, as well as the proposed 2024-25 tuition and fees. (Copy filed with the permanent minutes and marked Attachment B.)

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## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Following the presentation, Rector Baine called on Ms. O'Rourke to review the guidelines for the 30-minute public comment period. Each speaker was allotted three minutes to speak and were to limit their comments to the topic of tuition and fees.

Nine individuals from the Virginia Tech community pre-registered to speak; three of those nine did not appear at the virtual meeting to speak. During the meeting, two additional members of the Virginia Tech community registered to speak. In total, eight individuals gave public comments, and four of those speakers submitted typed versions of their comments to be entered into the public record. (Copy filed with the permanent minutes and marked Attachment C.)

The public comment session ended at 11:45 a.m.

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The public was also given the opportunity to submit written comments through April 1, 2024. The Board of Visitors is scheduled to take action on the proposed tuition and fees for 2024-25 at its next regular meeting on April 9, 2024. All public comments will be provided to the Board in preparation for that meeting and will become part of the public record.

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Edward H. Baine, Rector

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Kim O'Rourke, Secretary

**Board of Visitors to consider 2024-25 tuition and fees at April 9 meeting; virtual public comment opportunity scheduled for March 26**

The Virginia Tech Board of Visitors will meet on Tuesday, April 9, at 1:15 p.m. in 2100 Torgersen Hall (620 Drillfield Drive, Blacksburg) to consider tuition and mandatory fees for the 2024-25 academic year.

In advance of the April board meeting, Virginia Tech will provide a virtual public comment opportunity on Tuesday, March 26, at 11:00 a.m. The link to observe this event or to pre-register to speak will be posted on the [Board of Visitors website](#). Several members of the Board of Visitors will participate virtually as university officials provide an overview of proposed tuition and fees ranges and to receive public comment consistent with [guidelines](#) posted to the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors website.

Tuition and fees support the university's major strategic initiatives - Virginia Tech Global Distinction and the Virginia Tech Advantage - and serve as the primary source of operating revenue for delivering programs to our students. Tuition and fees are set in the context of university cost drivers and available state funding. Over the last several years, the board has prioritized the affordability of a Virginia Tech degree while making targeted investments that enhance the value of a Virginia Tech education to both students and the Commonwealth and continue to position the university as a leader in teaching, research, and innovation.

With a heightened focus on student affordability, the university launched the Virginia Tech Advantage plan which leverages state, philanthropic, and university resources to reduce unmet financial need and increase support for students' basic needs, career preparation, and transformational learning experiences. In addition to the Virginia Tech Advantage, the university continues to mitigate tuition increases through the strategic alignment of incremental state funding, cost containment strategies, administrative efficiencies, and internal reallocations to maximize available resources.

As a result of these continued efforts, the board has been able to limit the average in-state undergraduate tuition increase to just half the rate of inflation for the last 5 years. This was achieved while making a sustained commitment to advancing underserved and underrepresented student enrollment, increasing institutional support for student financial aid, and advancing critical initiatives that enhance Virginia Tech's mission as a leading global land-grant institution.

For the 2024-25 fiscal year, the university administration is modeling increases in tuition and Educational and General (E&G) fees from 0 to 3 percent, which is below the 4.9 percent increase included in the university's six-year plan approved by the Board of Visitors in November. The university administration will also recommend increases between 0 percent and 4 percent for mandatory non-E&G fees to support mandated cost increases including employee compensation and benefits, sustaining and enhancing student services including the transit system and student health/counseling services.

Virginia Tech maintains the lowest mandatory non-E&G fees among public four-year institutions in the Commonwealth.

### **March 26 public comment guidelines**

Following an overview of proposed tuition and fees ranges at the March 26 virtual event, there will be an opportunity for public comment. Those interested in participating in the virtual public comment event must pre-register at the [Board of Visitors website](#) on a first-come, first-served basis **no later than Tuesday, March 19**. Speakers will be asked to specify their affiliation with the university (current student, parent, alumnus, faculty or staff, member of the public).

The public comment period will be held for 30 minutes with the option to increase the time up to a total of 60 minutes if there is sufficient demand. If time remains during the half-hour public comment period after the pre-registered speakers offer their comments, additional speakers may be offered the opportunity to speak during the remaining time. Those who wish to speak but did not pre-register may submit a request via email to [yppg@vt.edu](mailto:yppg@vt.edu) between 11:00 and 11:45 a.m. on March 26.

In addition, there will be dedicated time slots for a representative from the Undergraduate Student Senate and from the Graduate and Professional Student Senate to provide a statement on behalf of their respective constituency. This does not preclude individual students from registering to speak during the public comment period or from providing written comments.

Each speaker will be limited to three minutes and must restrict their comments to tuition and fees only. Speakers wishing to have their comments entered in the public record must submit a typed copy via email to [bov@vt.edu](mailto:bov@vt.edu) by March 26.

If you are an individual with a disability and desire an accommodation, please send an email to [vppg@vt.edu](mailto:vppg@vt.edu) or call 540-231-6232 during regular business hours at least 10 days prior to the event.

The March 26 virtual budget workshop and public comment session will also be livestreamed for those who wish to observe (without offering comment). The link will be provided at [the Board of Visitors website](#). However, those wishing to make comments must register in accordance with the instructions above.

### **Guidelines for written comments**

In lieu of oral comments, written comments may be entered online at [the Board of Visitors website](#) or mailed to:

Kim O'Rourke  
Secretary to the Board of Visitors  
Virginia Tech (MC 0125)  
800 Drillfield Drive  
Blacksburg, VA 24061

Written comments must be received by Monday, April 1.

# TUITION & FEE PUBLIC HEARING

AMY SEBRING,  
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND  
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

March 26, 2024





# *VIRGINIA TECH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES*

## Virginia Tech Advantage

Embodies our land-grant mission by bridging financial gaps for students, ensuring steady degree progress, and fostering holistic student success

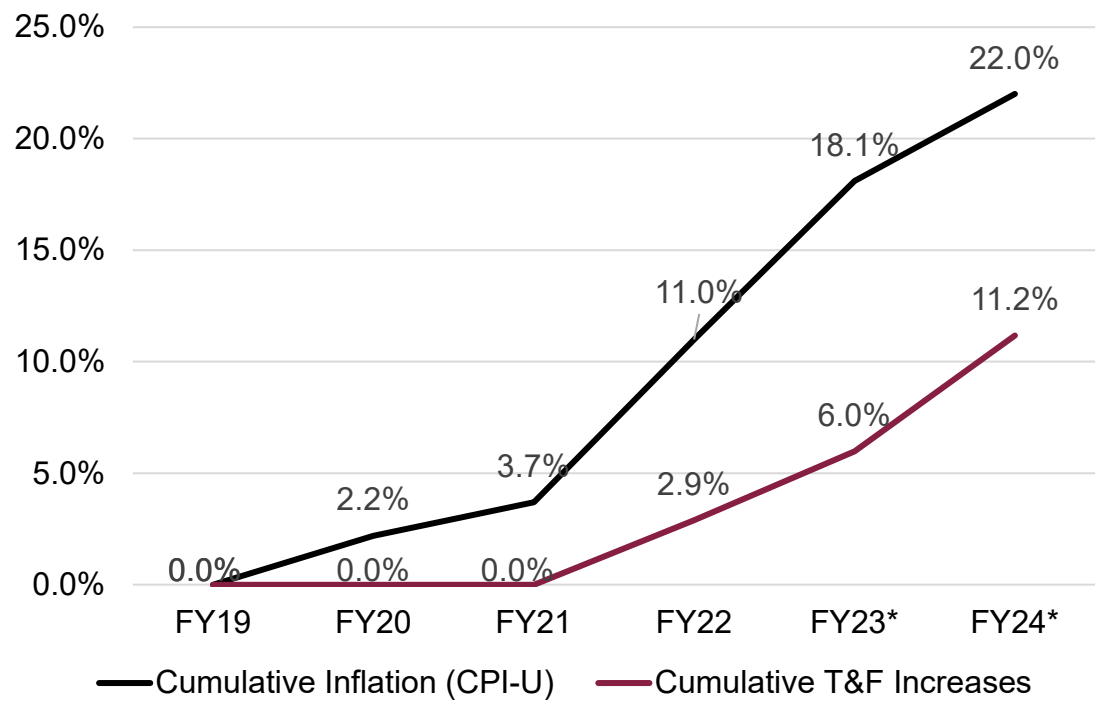
## Global Distinction

A commitment to institutional excellence across research, teaching, and engagement that makes the university a destination for the best faculty, students, and partners from the commonwealth, the nation, and the world

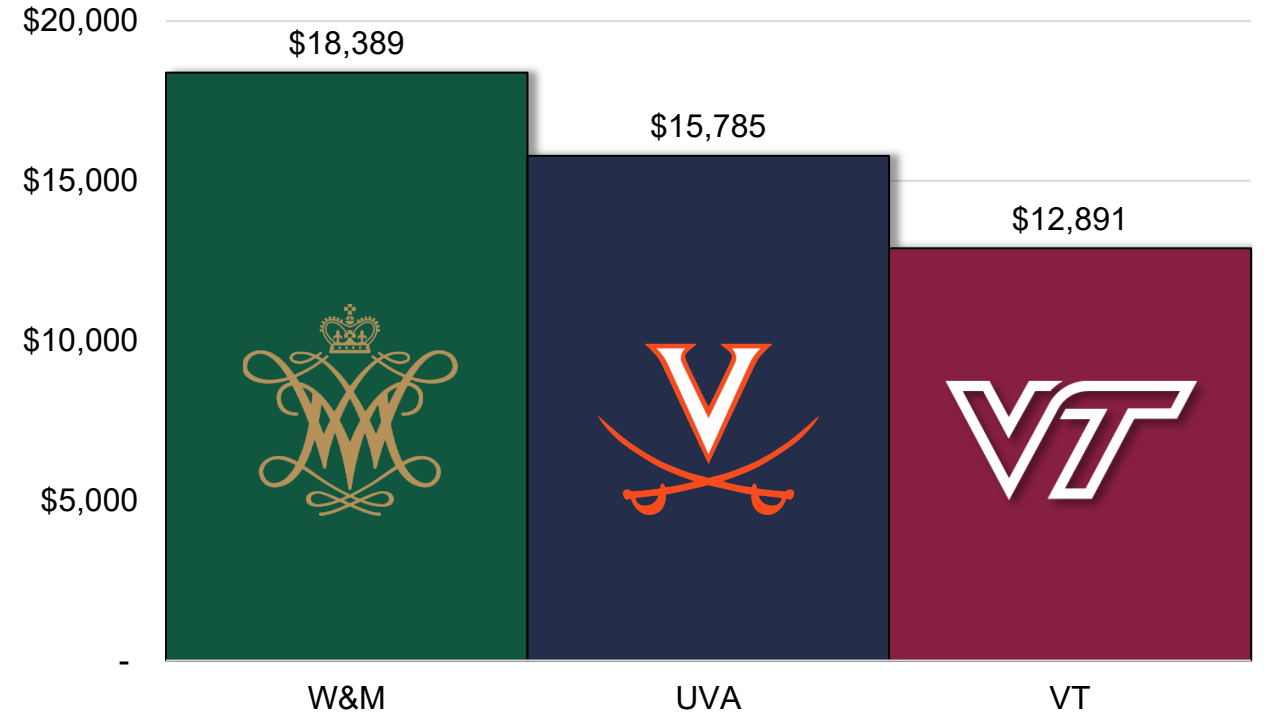
# OVER PAST 5 YEARS, TUITION INCREASED AT HALF THE RATE OF INFLATION

- Over the past five years:
  - Consumer Price Index (inflation) has increased **22%**
  - In-State undergraduate tuition has increased just **11%**

Virginia Tech In-State Tuition and E&G Fees vs. Inflation  
 FY19 - FY24



Virginia Public Four-Year Institutions  
 FY24 In-State Undergraduate Tuition & E&G Fees



Does not include program fees

\* FY23 and FY24 In-state increase offset by one-time tuition mitigation scholarships.



# VIRGINIA TECH ADVANTAGE EXPANDS COMMITMENT TO AFFORDABILITY

- Virginia Tech provided \$169 million in undergraduate grants and scholarships in FY23, of which \$71 million was need-based aid.
- Funds for the Future
  - *Offsets tuition and fee increases for continuing undergraduates whose family income is \$100,000 or less, ensuring they do not experience a net price increase over four years*
- Virginia Tech Advantage
  - *At scale, Virginia Tech Advantage will add \$51.5 million annually in need-based gift aid.*
  - *The 10-year fundraising goal of \$500 million*
    - *\$400 million in endowed scholarships,*
    - *\$50 million in current-use scholarships*
    - *\$25 million in endowed funds and another \$25 million in current-use funds to:*
      - *meet basic needs (food insecurity and emergency funds);*
      - *enhance career preparation (paid internships and coops, internship costs, mentoring and advising); and*
      - *offer transformational learning experiences (study abroad, undergraduate research, summer experiences).*
  - *Private funds will leverage institutional and governmental support.*

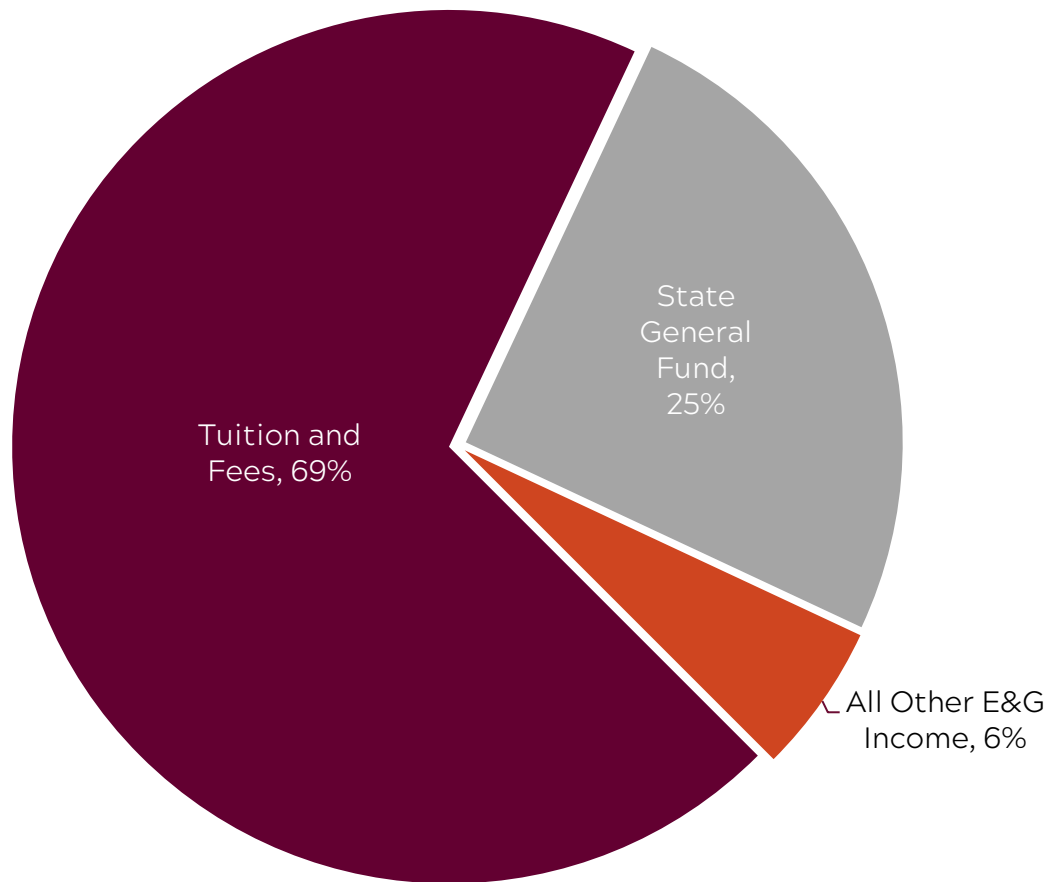
# STUDENT SUCCESS IS KEY TO RETURN ON INVESTMENT

- Strong Graduation Rate
  - 4-year: 69%
  - 6-year: 86%
- Average time-to-degree = 3.9 years
  - Shorter completion time lowers student cost
  - Seven of eight colleges below 4.0 years
- \$66,560 - Median starting salary of 2022 graduates

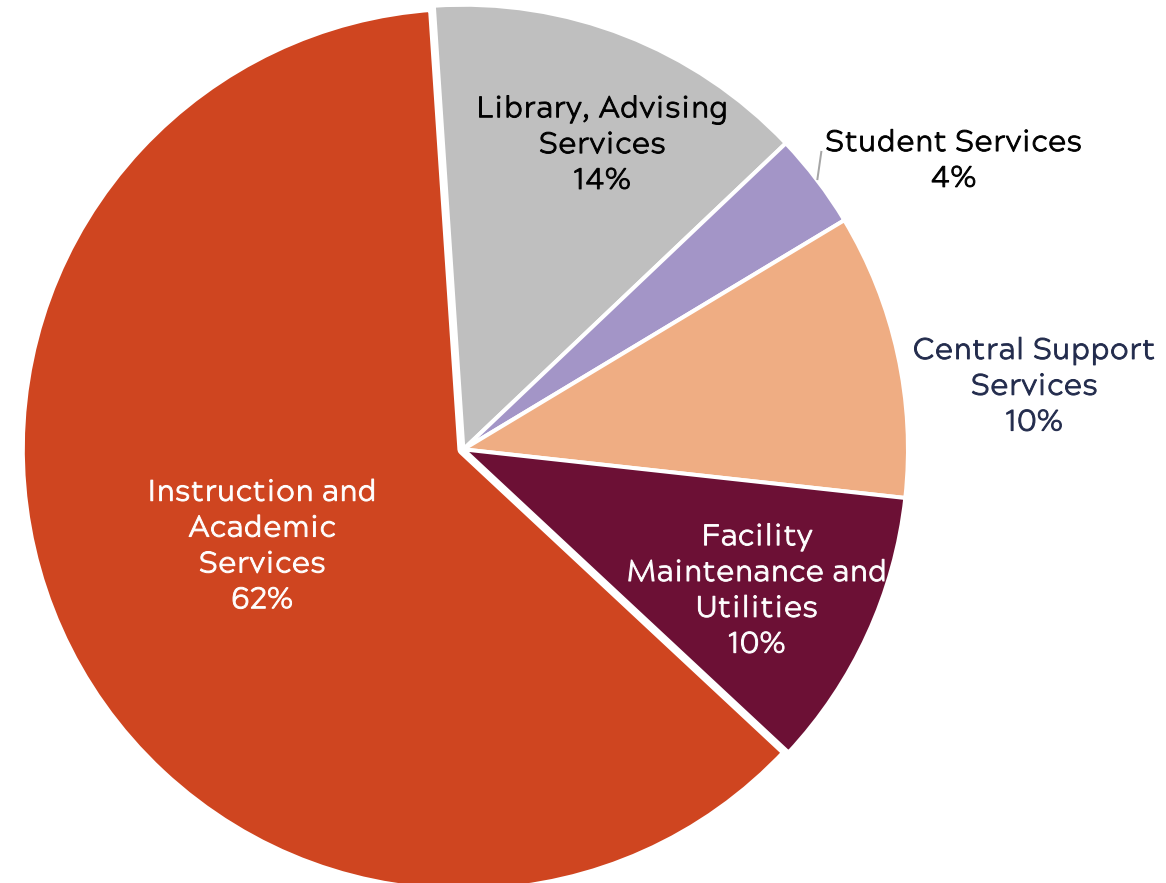
# TUITION DRIVES OUR ABILITY TO DELIVER EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

## *Educational & General Budget*

Revenue (sources)

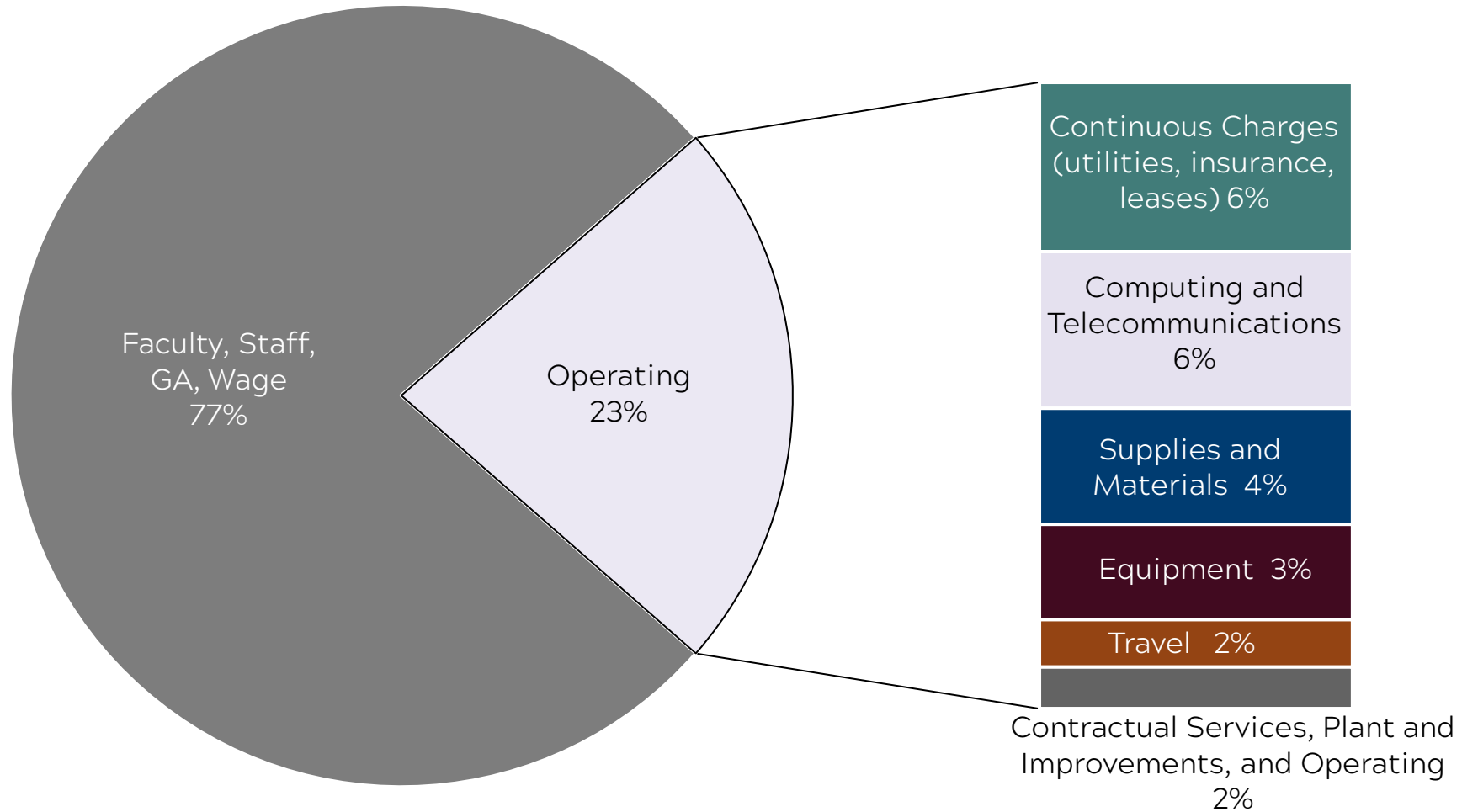


Expenditure by Function (uses)



# HIGHER EDUCATION IS PEOPLE INTENSIVE

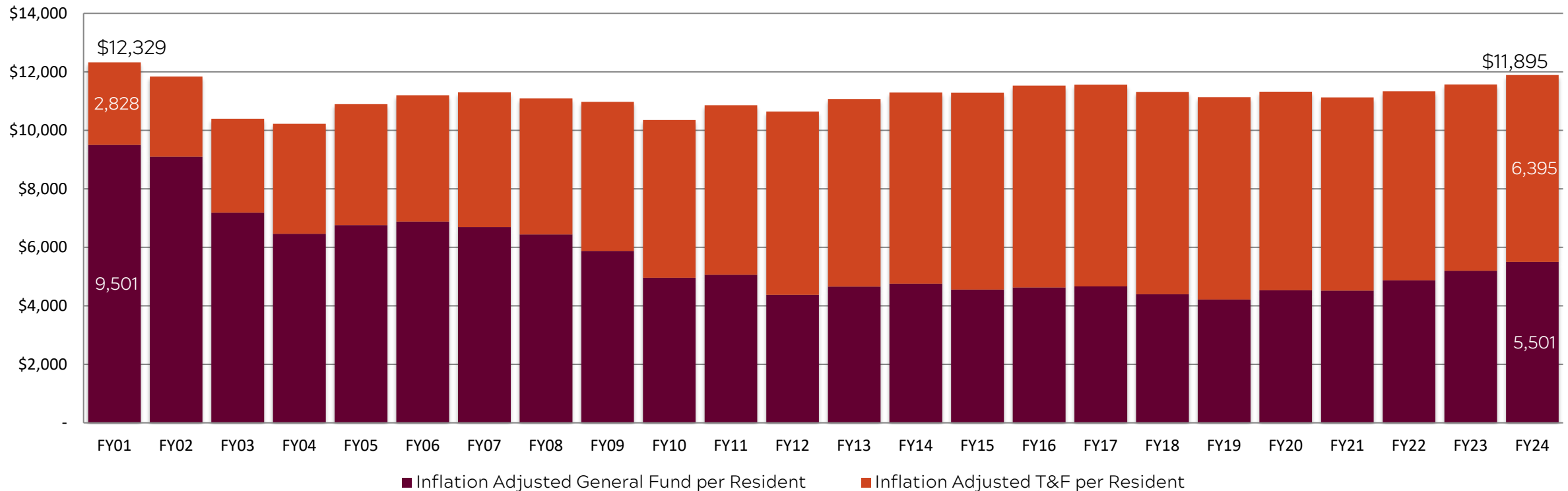
Personnel account for 77% of E&G cost



# STATE IS A CRITICAL PARTNER

- The Commonwealth subsidizes the cost of Virginia resident undergraduate education
- State support has evolved over time, shifting the burden to students/families
- Despite recent state investments, adjusted for inflation, the university receives \$4,000 less state support per resident student than in 2000

General Fund and Tuition and E&G Fees per In-State Undergraduate  
HEPI Inflation Adjusted to 2000

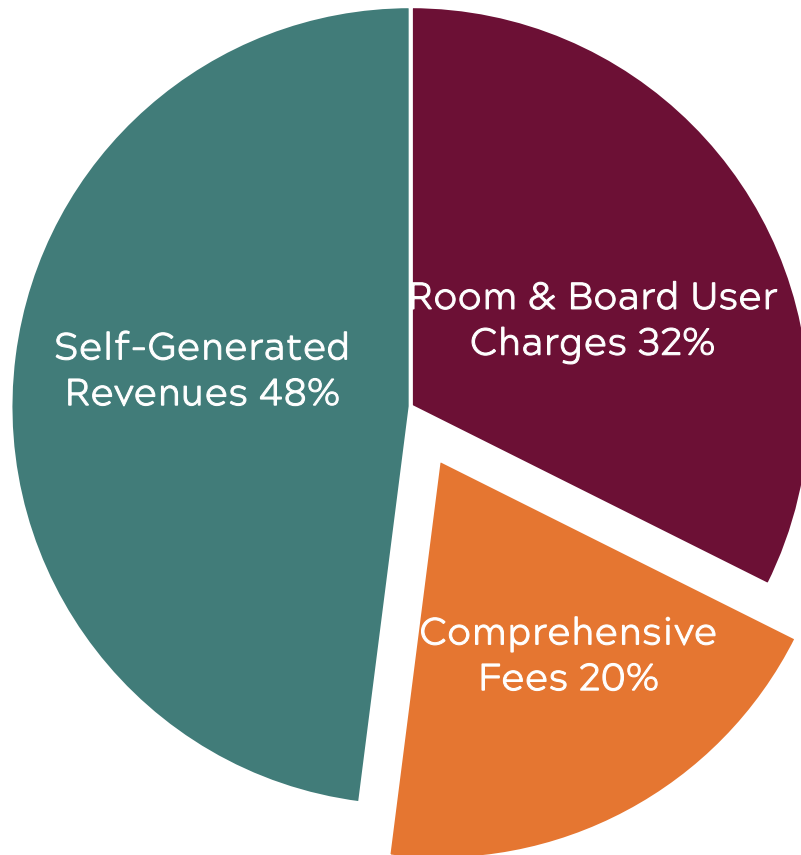


# FACTORS IN SETTING TUITION

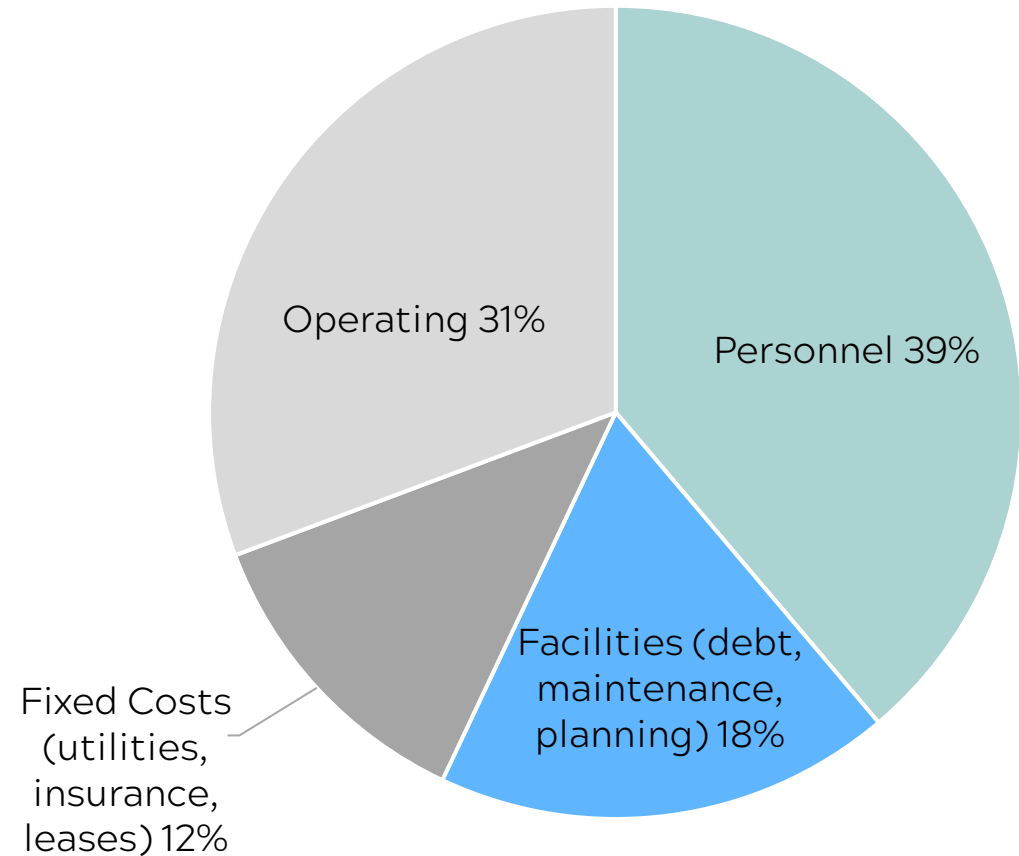
- Compensation (State requires the university to cover 62% of the cost of state-mandated compensation programs for E&G programs)
  - 77% of E&G expenses are personnel
    - Faculty, staff, graduate assistants, and wage employees
    - Competition for talent is increasing, raising labor costs
- State mandated costs including health care, retirement, and codified waivers
- Level of state support
- Unavoidable inflationary costs including utilities, insurance, leases, facility maintenance, and subscriptions
- Maintenance of academic quality
- Internal strategic reinvestments and efficiency gains

# COMPREHENSIVE FEE IS AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF AUXILIARY ENTERPRISE FUNDING

Revenue (sources)



Expenditures (uses)



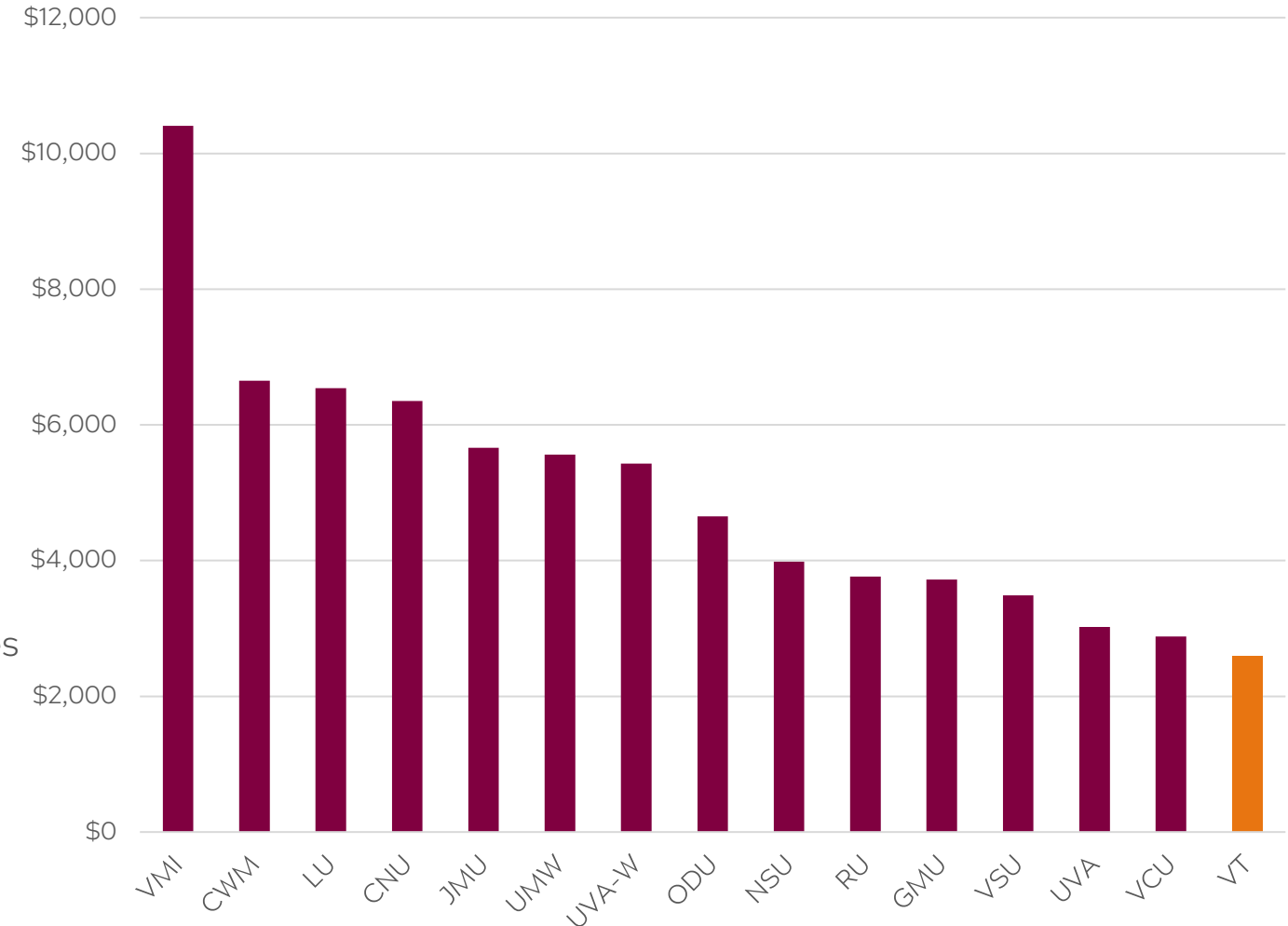
# AUXILIARY PROGRAMS PROVIDE KEY SUPPORT SERVICES

The Comprehensive Fee supports:

- **Student Health**
  - Student health & counseling services
- **Student Activities**
  - Student activities, centers, & organizations
- **Student Services**
  - Transportation programs
  - Wireless service
- **Athletics**
  - Intercollegiate athletics
- **Recreational Sports**
  - Recreational programs, sports clubs, & facilities

Factors influencing fee development include state compensation and benefits, inflationary costs, health and counseling, transit operations, and facility maintenance.

VT has the lowest Comprehensive Fee of Virginia's public four-year institutions.





# Ranges for 2024-25 Tuition and Fee Increases

	2024-25
Virginia Undergraduate Tuition	0.0% - 3.0%
Nonresident Undergraduate Tuition	0.0% - 3.0%
Virginia Graduate Tuition	0.0% - 3.0%
Nonresident Graduate Tuition	0.0% - 3.0%
Comprehensive Fee	0.0% - 4.0%

# VIRGINIA TECH: VALUE AND QUALITY Attachment C

Top 20

Best Public Schools - *U.S. News & World Report*

Top 10

Return on Investment among public research universities - 2022  
*Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce Study*

Top 40

Best National Universities - *Washington Monthly*

Top 50

Best National Universities - *U.S. News & World Report*

- Written comments will continue to be accepted through April 1
- All comments will be made available to the Board of Visitors prior to consideration of undergraduate and graduate tuition and fees

# PUBLIC COMMENT

**COMMENTS MADE AT THE MARCH 26, 2024, PUBLIC COMMENT SESSION**

Aileen Suarez

"Hi my name is Aileen Suarez and I'm a 4th year PhD Candidate at Virginia Tech. I'm taking the time out of my workday to ask the board of visitors not to raise tuition and fees for the upcoming academic year. Each year comprehensive fees increase and wage increases do not account for that. Even though efforts have been made to raise the living wage for graduate students, we do not feel those benefits. More than 3000 dollars per semester (4 months of rent for me) goes back to the university for services that folks can not use throughout the complete year. And on top of that, we have to pay taxes on our stipends before paying these comprehensive fees. New graduate students are not told of the upfront cost of attending this institution and I feel that others would not have chosen Virginia Tech if they knew before signing their contract. The fees are a burden to me and others financially with the stipend we are getting paid currently. The cost of living continues to rise with inflation and reducing the fee increase could help alleviate some of the complications when we just want to pursue higher education and focus on our research but we're all speaking here today."

Oliver Shuey

I'm a graduate student in the dept of science, technology, and society. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to provide community input and thank you for considering a 0% increase. I'm fortunate enough to receive assistantship funding through my department, but the level of support is still insufficient because of the cost of living. In AY 23-24, roughly \$210 (approximately 18% of my bi-weekly income, which is \$1,105.94) was taken out of every paycheck to cover my fees.

I understand that my graduate education is a privilege, but I find living paycheck-to-paycheck while studying at a globally-ranked university to be demoralizing. Asking graduate students to sacrifice their personal security in the name of achievement is wrong, we shouldn't have to pay more to attend school each year when the demands for our labor continue to outgrow the level of grad student compensation. It would be a big help to all grad students if the increase in fees is kept at 0%. Thank you.

Ben Burdick

The comprehensive fees are too high as they are. A monthly payment towards comprehensive fees constitutes 80 percent of my rent for that month alone, and I am in a very privileged position as a STEM student in a well-funded field. Other students cannot be as lucky, and it is for these reasons that I am requesting a 0 percent increase in comprehensive fees this year.

Riley DeHority

"Hi everyone, I'm back again! I commented last year on the proposed fee increases and I'm excited to be back here with you all.

I think it's awesome that you are considering a 0% increase this year. I understand that costs have increased with inflation and that the state budget is somewhat under question, but it feels great to know that student concerns about the burden of fees are being looked into.

Last year my department Biological Systems Engineering, as part of CALS and in response to advocacy by grad students, raised our stipends by nearly \$400 per month, from around 2,400 to around 2,800 a month. This was a huge deal for us.

I also got a position in GPSS, which is an extra \$5,000 a year. And my assistantship does extend over the summer. So for me, I am in a much more doable financial position than I was when I commented last year.

But not everyone is in that same position as I am. Two years ago, 92% of grad assistants were under a living wage. That number is much lower now thanks to recent minimum stipend increases, I don't have data for the spring, but we still don't have a guaranteed living wage for grad assistants.

I wish everyone could have the support I do to make paying fees a reasonable proposition, but they don't. I also want to mention that the living wage calculations do not take into account dependents that grad students may have, or taxes for international grad students. Every country has a different tax treaty with the US, if they even have one, and those can be brutal, which a lot of people don't know.

I still remember being shocked by the fees after accepting my first contract here. The amount that I would need to pay my employer would have been a much higher part of my calculations when deciding where to go. I tried to understand it at the time, but the fee tables are very hard to navigate for people who aren't in finance. You aren't told what fees apply to you when being offered a contract.

That's why I would like to encourage the BOV and the finance department to not raise fees, and to do whatever you can to have fees covered by grants, other sponsored programs, and whatever you can legally allocate to them under the current law. Having fees covered should be normal, with as many students getting them paid for as possible. Until then, please do whatever you can to not raise fees this year.

I understand that grad students are not the only people on campus who need a living wage: I want our bus drivers and dining workers and the people who work in Squires to be paid well too. So let's see what we can do to pay for these through means that aren't literally more than rent.

I also want to mention that I recently met someone who had been promised fees to be covered by their department, only to have that taken away after they reported misconduct. It was blamed on the 2% increase in December but it was just retaliation. A policy where fees are covered for grad assistants would limit this opportunity to retaliate against students. Thank you."