

**RESOLUTION DELEGATING SPECIAL TIME-LIMITED EMERGENCY AUTHORITY TO THE
PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY TO ADDRESS FISCAL IMPACTS OF THE COVID-19
PANDEMIC THROUGH FISCAL YEAR 2021**

FINANCE AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

June 2, 2020

WHEREAS, in the winter of 2020, the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, swiftly swept the globe, prompting Governor Northam to declare a state of emergency for the Commonwealth of Virginia, which was followed by a declaration of emergency for Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University by President Sands; and

WHEREAS, in the midst of spring semester 2020, along with the vast majority of universities nationwide, the leadership of Virginia Tech made the unprecedented decision of transitioning all classes to on-line delivery after spring break for the remainder of the semester and then extended the on-line-only format through the summer of 2020; and

WHEREAS, on June 12, 2006, the Board of Visitors approved a series of resolutions to implement the Restructured Higher Education Financial and Administrative Operations Act, among them a human resources resolution that “(1) affirmed existing personnel policies would continue to be in place for newly hired university staff (salaried non-faculty employees hired on or after July 1, 2006) until such time that a new human resources system is adopted by the Board and (2) established severance policies comparable to those already in place for eligible faculty and newly hired university staff until such time as new severance policies are developed and approved by the Board”; and

WHEREAS, the Board recognizes that the current dramatic impact of the pandemic on the state’s economy has the potential to result in reductions in general fund support and other sources of revenues, the president of the university needs multiple strategies to address the financial impact of the pandemic. Therefore, as one of those strategies, the Board wishes to delegate authority to the president of the university for a finite period of time to take exceptional measures to reduce expenditures in order to preserve the Virginia Tech workforce to the greatest extent feasible; and

WHEREAS, the Board recognizes the financial strain and other stresses caused by the pandemic on students and their families, which impacts the Board’s decision whether and to what extent to increase tuition and fees as a mitigation strategy for potentially significant reductions in revenues;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Visitors of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University is very mindful of the disruption and stress that the pandemic has created in the professional and personal lives of the university’s employees and expresses its deep appreciation for the commitment to Ut Prosim exhibited by staff and faculty and their flexibility, adaptability, and tireless efforts to protect the university community and continue to carry out the university’s missions in this extraordinary period; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Board of Visitors of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University hereby suspends, for the timeframe specified in the final paragraph below, any provisions outlined in the Faculty Handbook pertaining to furloughs or salary reductions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Board delegates temporarily to the president of the university the authority to institute furloughs and/or temporary base salary reductions affecting faculty and university staff for the timeframe specified in the final paragraph below based on employment category in a sum not to exceed 20 percent of base salary, achieved through salary reduction or furlough or a combination of both; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Board requires that the president consult with the Rector and share with the Board a plan for enacting this authority before the delegation of authority can take effect; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT said plan for furloughs or temporary base salary reductions be included as a potential one-time mitigating strategy that would be a component of the comprehensive budget planning process that will also include any necessary permanent base budget reductions to personnel and operating expenditures for the university to respond to reductions in university resources; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT such plan shall incorporate key guiding principles that reflect the university's commitments to the health and safety of personnel and students, and to teaching, research, and outreach, such that when implemented, the plan is transparent and shared with the broader university community; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT such furloughs or salary reductions shall not be considered grievable issues under the grievance procedures for faculty and university staff; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT should the General Assembly or the Governor of Virginia subsequently issue any orders that affect the workforce of Virginia Tech, the plan referenced in the previous paragraphs will be reviewed and revised by the president to ensure compliance with said direction, and actions already taken by the university will be reviewed to determine if adjustments are warranted; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the university will provide to the Board a report at least quarterly on the actions taken and corresponding financial and programmatic impacts; and

LASTLY, BE IT RESOLVED THAT this delegation of authority and any temporary actions implemented in accordance with this delegation of authority will expire no later than June 30, 2021.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the resolution delegating special time-limited authority to the president of the university to address the fiscal impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic be approved, to become effective at the time specified within the resolution.

June 2, 2020