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Commenter	ContactInformation	Comment	Affiliation
John Wagstaff	bitbybitfarm@gmail.com 434-349-6720	<p>Tuition should not be increased. As an alum as well as a parent of current VT student. I am appalled at the fees that are being charged to day students that do not use the services that the fees are being charged!</p> <p>There are many ways that VT could cut costs. As a business owner, I know that I have to watch costs and not raise prices if I want to stay in business. I would suggest a freeze or cut in administration salaries. I would also suggest a cut or freeze for any faculty member making over 60K.</p> <p>I would suggest cutting programs that only a small number of students use.</p> <p>If you do increase fees, those students that receive Pell Grants etc of have a AFC of 0 should see the cost off set by increased financial aid.</p>	Parent
		<p>My son has experienced reduced services while we have paid full fees throughout the 2 years he has been a student at Virginia Tech. Just as one example the gym at the war memorial has been completely unavailable. Because of that, the one gym that is available to the entire student body is overly crowded making it difficult to find an available time to work out. Of course last year most services were unavailable during the pandemic. Buses have been late and few and far between. Lines at dining halls so long that students had been forced to pay extra fees to use grub hub. In some majors there are not enough classes available to students who need to register for them. The list goes on. On top of that many of us were not given cost of living raises or any raises for that matter. Furthermore, it does not seem right to have part of current tuition/fees be allotted to projects or buildings our current students will never use. For these reasons and more I respectfully submit that a tuition and/or fee increase would be unwarranted and unwelcome. Thank you.</p>	Parent
Jordan Westcott	jwestcott@vt.edu 405-315-3068	<p>I am writing to ask that increases to tuition and fees up to 4.9% (and up to 5.9% for non-E&G fees) be kept as close to 1% or lower as possible, particularly given that graduate student compensation is not likely to increase in accordance with the tuition and fee increases. Many families, including my own, are still financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and greater increases to tuition and fees create undue burden on students, particularly graduate students who often do not have the same family support as undergraduate students. Please consider the smallest possible increase in fees and continue the trend of the last several years by keeping it to 1%.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>	Student

Commenter	ContactInformation	Comment	Affiliation
David Mueller	potus4@gmail.com	<p>Dear Board of Visitors, There are two culprits behind rising tuition and fees at Virginia Tech.</p> <p>First, the availability of government money is the main driver of ever rising tuition and fees at Virginia Tech and other universities.</p> <p>Because the federal government is there to write tuition checks year after year, Virginia Tech spends profligately and irresponsibly. Bureaucrats at Virginia Tech know they can go on wild building programs, create and enforce programs that violate free speech, create safe spaces, etc, and the federal government will dutifully step up and write the checks, no questions asked.</p> <p>The best way to bring down the cost of tuition and fees is to ban government money and secondly, to take an axe to degree requirements.</p> <p>For instance, there is no reason that it should take four years to get a degree in English. In fact, it should take no more than two years. Many of the 120 hours for a degree are simply "make work" classes. A person does not need a foreign language requirement for an English degree or most other degrees. It's a welfare program for otherwise unemployable foreign language professors. This is a scandalous waste of time and taxpayer money. The goal should be to get students in and out of Virginia Tech quickly so graduates can go on to be productive and contributing members of society. Instead, Virginia Tech in debts, coddles, and prolongs.</p> <p>If serious people are on the Board of Visitors, and its members are equally serious about tuition and fees, then its members need to understand how government money and degree requirements are culprits. The bureaucrats at Virginia Tech are dangerously addicted to government money and have created a self reinforcing system of degree requirements that make certain tuition and fees will increase. Without seriously addressing the issues I've brought up, the scam will continue. And it also means that not a single person on the Board of Visitors is a serious person. Not a one of you.</p>	Member of the Public

Good afternoon Board members and guests. My name is Caroline Lohr. I am the Undergraduate Student Senate President, and I am speaking with you today on behalf of the undergraduate population.

I believe that there is a lot of confusion when it comes to the discussion of tuition with students. A lot of them assume that their tuition goes to Virginia Tech, an academic institution as a whole rather than divided up into multiple entities within Virginia Tech. Students always ask me why am I paying \$30,000 a year, to continuously struggle to find parking, or have to wait two to three weeks to talk to someone about my mental struggles. Are we not a billion dollar foundation? Where does my money go? I then have to elaborate that a bulk of those areas where students are complaining are auxiliary funds. That their tuition is the majority of what funds that entity. Students want to know where their money is going and want to feel the benefit of it outside of the academic region. We see the buildings being put up and new construction happening all over campus, yet a majority of students won't A. be here to reap those benefits or B. they don't apply to them. I do my best to elaborate that a lot of that funding for that comes from donors or the state.

I also try to explain to students that without proper funding from the state level, the responsibility of funds falls onto students. A lack of financial transparency and an increase of costs for students will affect those who wish to come to Virginia Tech, and the retention rate of current students. Without students there is no university and our voices must be heard during this time.

The voices that tell me that they barely have enough money to be here, but they work 40 hour weeks, on top of being a full time student just to pay for their tuition even with the pell grant and scholarships. Even with financial assistance they still can barely make ends meet.

The anxiety of money swarms them, when that happens they go seek help at the best counseling center in the nation. But please wait an extended amount of time to get help because they are short staffed and underfunded . And because of this a lot of students resent the idea of Cook Counseling because while it makes Virginia Tech be seen and heard to the nation, the students who go through it do not feel seen or heard by Virginia Tech.

While I am advocating for no raised tuition for students, I ask that if there is an increase that is focused on the students and the students experiences, safety, and well-being. My team and I have spoken with state legislators and national representatives advocating for more funds and grants for students. I ask of you along with us, that the drive for lobbying to the state and national government does not let up. Ut

prosim, that I may serve, is something that is promoted to professors, students, faculty and staff, to serve one another in the Hokie spirit.

Yet, when students struggle to make ends meet and don't see the results of the fees that they are already paying, they do not feel Ut Prosim from the institution. You, the Board, have the power to change that, and I encourage you to act with students in mind. I know you make hard decisions, however, when it comes to this, please do your due diligence and serve the students who are the reason you are sitting here today.

Fees stuff

Hi everyone, my name is Jack Leff (he/him/his) and I am the president of the graduate and professional student senate.

The budget that is supported largely--although not exclusively--by tuition and fees is a statement of priorities and university values. Right now, students are offered limited avenues to advocate for what those priorities should be, in no small part because advocating for tuition and fees has been heavily limited or largely unavailable to us before this year. I appreciate the opportunity to speak before you today, the graduate students believe that the state requirements surrounding more transparency are a step in the right direction.

However, at Virginia Tech we strive to be leaders rather than simply adhere to the bare minimum, so I hope we take this opportunity to not just be compliant with state guidance but instead use this as a chance to be more transparent and democratic across the board. While this forum is a good first step, it is too late in the process of generating the university budget to have sufficient input into what the university's priorities ought to be so my recommendations will be predicated on increasing advocacy opportunities. Thus, our first recommendation is that we have more of these forums and have them earlier concerning tuition and fees as well as the budget development process.

I'd also encourage us to get creative with the forms of input we solicit. Perhaps having more tuition and fee workshops with an exit survey that collects information. Maybe we should be asking students for a list of priorities to them and having that influence tuition and fees. We have a lot of room to grow in unique ways here that we should think carefully about.

Second, we'd like to have more advocacy around specific fees rather than treating them as a package in order to advocate for individual student services. Fees at Virginia Tech go to support vital auxiliaries like Cook Counseling, that have historically not received the funding they need for a student body our size so we'd actually like to advocate for higher health fees to support them. I am happy to justify that claim after this speech in the interest of time because I know it's mildly contentious, but the point is that we would like to see the ability to advocate for certain fees like the student health fee so that we can improve these services. However, because we're worried about exorbitantly high fees, especially since VT already has much higher fees than all of our peers, we'd also like the opportunity to advocate for lower fees elsewhere, which is a more granular and precise form of input than has traditionally been solicited from the students.

Third, we need to have more transparent documentation of use of tuition and fees. The budget office financial reports are helpful, but often opaque, especially to students, staff members, and administrators who don't have an economics or finance background. So, our third recommendation is to communicate budgets in a way that is accessible to those we serve throughout the process of developing them. This is a way to make financial advocacy more accessible for the university population as a whole and another site where creativity is encouraged and we should turn to peers as models.

Dear Board Members and Visitors:

My name is Jimmy Heagerty, I am a senior majoring in business management Analytics, Consulting, and economics.

In my time at Virginia Tech I've been very involved in the University community. I've met with and talked to students from all different places and backgrounds learning that each person, and their perspectives are so different. What was always the same? Our financial struggle as college students. Battling rising costs in the grocery store or at the gas pump, trying to keep up with paying for new devices, softwares, and textbooks. Increasing that burden could seem marginal but margins matter, and part of Ut prosim is being there to serve and protect our most vulnerable.

In closing , If we can't move on tuition and fees we can at least provide the quality advisory services FREE to students on campus. Where I work in the Hokie Financial Wellness we have a dedicated staff of student interns who work, unpaid, and tirelessly to understand how students can pay for college, loan infrastructure systems, credit, and budgeting strategies to be able to be a wealth of knowledge for our peers. With more this office could do more to minimize the impact that increased financial strain is putting on students.

Thank you

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James

March 28, 2022

Dear Board of Visitors Members,

I want to thank the University's administration and staff—especially those involved with budgeting and finance—for the incredible work they've done during the Covid-19 induced period of unprecedented uncertainty from which we are now beginning to emerge.

As you know, in addition to my position as the Graduate Student Representative to the Board, I also serve as mayor of the historic Town of Crewe. Although Crewe's budget is miniscule in comparison to Virginia Tech's, I believe serving a small, economically disadvantaged community gives me unique insight into the decision you may face if an increase in tuition and/or fees is recommended.

I understand the fiduciary duty you have to the University; as well as the challenges in weighing advice and recommendations from staff against the very real needs, concerns, and struggles of those financially impacted by increases to tuition and fees (or in the case of Crewe, taxes and fees).

Whether a small town or a major university, as leaders we need to find that balance between not doing enough to move our communities forward and doing too much too quickly to the detriment of our constituents; between generating more revenue and finding cost-savings within the budget. Raising costs are among the hardest decisions we must make.

For me, raising tuition and fees—increasing the financial stress on students and putting them further into debt—should be a last resort, taken only when we've exhausted all other alternatives. As a leader, I would also want to understand the details and data surrounding the alternatives and ultimate recommendation.

To that end, from my own observations state agencies are currently in better financial situations than we feared this time last year. As we gather for our quarterly meeting, the General Assembly is also scheduled to meet to discuss the state budget—including how to spend large amounts of unanticipated money.

My basic understanding of the positive situation we're in is that a combination of (1) conservative budgeting during the Covid uncertainty; (2) better-than-expected revenues; and (3) an unanticipated influx of money from the federal government that went to supplement and supplant new and existing programs all contribute to state agencies ending the fiscal year with leftover money. Because state agencies cannot carry over certain funds, they must either spend them before June 30 or give it back to the state.

I assume Virginia Tech also budgeted conservatively during the Covid uncertainty; may have better-than-expected revenues (or at least not worse than expected); and received an unanticipated influx of money from the federal government that went to supplement and supplant new and existing programs. Without knowing the details of the projected budget for the current

fiscal year but seeing how other state agencies have fared, I would also assume that our university is in a similar position: with leftover money that must be spent before June 30. Therefore, in the spirit of understanding the details and data surrounding any recommendation for raising tuition and fees and all the viable alternatives, I recommend the Board ask the following questions:

1. At the beginning of the current calendar year, were we anticipating any greater-than-normal excess funds? If so, how much?
2. Has that projection changed and, if so, how?
3. If we were anticipating leftover funds we could not carry over, were any of those funds spent on programs or initiatives already?
4. Are there ways we can use any anticipated excess funds before the end of the fiscal year to mitigate or eliminate the need to raise tuition and fees? For example, can we prepay expenses for the next fiscal year, thereby lowering the cost burden over the next year?

Tuition and fee increases may be necessary but should be seen as a last resort. If we are currently in a better financial position than budgeted, we should use our unanticipated resources to mitigate or eliminate any tuition or fee increase for next year before spending on any unbudgeted programs or initiatives in the current year.

Thank you for your time, and for your continued service to Virginia Tech.

Yours in service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Miskovic', written in a cursive style.

Phil Miskovic
Graduate Student Representative
to the Board of Visitors