

Good afternoon, esteemed members of the Board of Visitors,

I appreciate the opportunity to address you today. My name is Emma Roshioru, and I serve as President of the Undergraduate Student Senate. I am here today to address an urgent concern for undergraduate students across our institution: the rising costs of tuition and fees.

Too often, undergraduate students are reduced to stereotypes. We are merely carefree, financially dependent procrastinators. However, I assure you this is far from the truth. Nationally, students and their families paid an average of \$30,000 in tuition in 2025, a 9% increase from the year before, and of this, only 39.5% came from family support. The rest, instead, was pieced together through scholarships, grants, student loans, and personal savings. On top of this, the National Center for Education Statistics finds that 74% of undergraduate students are employed. Here, over 8,000 undergraduate and graduate students are employed by Virginia Tech.

Our students do not just learn, they are campus employees, caretakers, mentors, and essential contributors to the community, and I, for one, am in awe of each of them. Consider the reality of a student's schedule. There are 168 hours in a week. We, as students, need to graduate as soon as possible to prevent the cost of further tuition, so we take the maximum amount of credits at 18 hours a week, with a recommended 6 hours per credit used for homework. Only, to expedite our academic careers, we apply to take an additional 3 credit hours to account for internship experience, which, to be a competitive applicant, takes 10 hours of extracurricular activity a week. And the internship, although it's unpaid and requires 20 hours a week, is needed to look competitive enough to employers after graduation in an increasingly volatile job market. Now add two 15-hour-a-week part-time jobs to help with tuition costs, and that's 117 hours for work and school. Add seven hours of sleep per night, and you get an astonishing 166 hours!

With a schedule like this, students are forced to choose between sleep and studying, between earning an income and gaining experience, and maintaining their well-being or simply keeping up. Such a cycle would make anyone wonder: What is the real cost of an education?

By minimizing the cost barrier, we maximize the invaluable, that is, time. Time to focus on their studies, pursue experiential learning, and job opportunities to ensure success both during and out of college. Through lower tuition rates, Virginia Tech improves retention, strengthens student outcomes, and enhances the value of the institution. With this, I respectfully urge that any increase to tuition and fees remain as close to zero as possible. Thank you.

Greetings Members of the Board of Visitors,

I am writing today to advocate for reducing tuition for summer classes at Virginia Tech. As an instructor of summer classes for Biochemistry majors, I can attest that enrollment is often very low. Within our department we talk about a minimum threshold of enrollment to justify running the summer courses at all. Many students pay out of pocket for summer classes and reports from the advisors in my department indicate, a large portion of our students elect to take these summer classes at other institutions to save money. I love my job, but I know that I am happiest when I can teach a reasonable number of students at a time. Reducing tuition in the summer would help students during the summer session, but also during the Fall and Spring Semesters by evening out the student-to-teach ratio in both cases.

Thank you for your time,

Sincerely,

Kristopher C. Hite

"Hi all. Thank you for allowing me to speak today and to voice my concerns over the proposed rise in course fees. Course fees at Virginia Tech are already exorbitantly higher than those at any other university I've been enrolled in. There is no visibility prior to signing our contracts informing us of how exorbitant the course fees are and grad students have no assistance in paying these fees other than loans. Course fees take \$250 from each of my paychecks, my second most costly bill behind my rent. While a 2.9% raise in course fees appears nominal to you all, when grad students are already living paycheck to paycheck it's untenable to expect us to pay more. I do everything people who call themselves financially savvy recommend. I don't eat out. I don't have a car payment. I work 6-7 days of the week during the summer to save money to make ends meet during the school year. I already have memorized the weekly food pantry hours. Yet I haven't been able to afford to buy meat from the grocery store since January. I have to choose between specialty medical care and going into debt to receive said medical care. I had to check whether getting gas this week would overdraft my account. There is nothing left for me to give up to cover these additional course fees."

Best!

Emilie Helmbold



Thomas Feely
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To: Virginia Tech Board of Visitors
From: Thomas Feely
Subject: Oral Comments for Public Tuition and Fee Hearing
Date: 2 April 2026

Good afternoon, Members of the Board,

As you are aware, the State has not passed a budget, so we have the opportunity to advocate to the general assembly to increase funding for when we make decisions at the June Board of Visitors Budget Meeting. We can reconcile the trend change in funding mix that Ms. Sebring has identified from the state over the last twenty years.

As Emma and other peers have mentioned, students spend a significant amount of time on studies and employment to afford this experience and encounter what has been referred to as time poverty.

We recognize that tuition and fees must be set at the April meeting so that families can make an informed decision on where to invest in their education.

In the Spring of 2024, students received a tuition rebate. This is an opportunity, should the board elect not to maintain a 0% tuition increase at the April meeting.

I look forward to furthering my understanding of the external financial pressures and speaking with my peers to inform my remarks when we meet in two weeks at the April meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,
Thomas Feely

These are my remarks as best I can recall, as typed after delivery.

Commentor Name	Affiliation	Comment
Shallon Jozi	Student	Increase in tuition makes it harder for graduate students who are already struggling with current fees to do quality work as the weight of tuition is on them and their supervisors. Continuous increase in tuition makes it harder to focus on research and this affects the quality of results we get overall putting the university on a difficulty position
Zoie McMillian	Student	<p>I am a graduate student at Virginia Tech, and I strongly urge the Board of Visitors to reconsider any increase in mandatory fees for the 2026–27 academic year.</p> <p>While I understand the university's commitment to maintaining affordability and investing in strategic initiatives, the current fee structure already places a significant and disproportionate burden on graduate students. On average, we pay around \$3,000 per year in mandatory fees—costs that are not covered by assistantships and must be paid out of pocket.</p> <p>For many of us, graduate stipends are less than \$28,000 annually before taxes. After accounting for housing, food, healthcare, and other basic living expenses, there is little financial flexibility left. An increase in fees—no matter how modest it may seem institutionally—has a real and immediate impact on our ability to afford basic necessities.</p> <p>Importantly, many of the justifications provided for fee increases do not reflect the lived reality of graduate students. For example, while undergraduate affordability initiatives like Virginia Tech Advantage are commendable, they do not extend meaningfully to graduate students, who are both workers and students contributing to the university's teaching and research mission. Similarly, fees tied to services such as athletics or certain student amenities are not equally utilized by graduate students, yet we are required to bear these costs.</p> <p>Graduate students are essential to Virginia Tech's identity as a leading research institution. We teach courses, mentor undergraduates, conduct research, and contribute directly to the university's reputation and productivity. Increasing fees without addressing graduate compensation or providing targeted relief effectively reduces our already limited income.</p> <p>If the university is truly committed to affordability, I urge you to consider the following: Freeze or reduce mandatory fees for graduate students Expand financial support programs to explicitly include graduate students Align fee structures more closely with actual usage and need</p> <p>Maintaining low fees relative to peer institutions is not meaningful if those fees are still unaffordable for the students paying them.</p> <p>I respectfully ask that you prioritize the financial well-being of graduate students and avoid increasing mandatory fees at this time. Thank you for your consideration.</p>
Elizabeth Fritsch	Student	<p>While I understand the need to fund the athletic growth at Virginia tech, it feels unfair for these funds to come from graduate students who have been underrepresented in all community and athletic events because they are not designed to be welcoming or inclusive to the graduate school. If you are going to raise our fees, then I think it is only fair for the university to make a considerable effort to make the services that we are paying for more graduate student friendly and accessible. There has been many promises made by this university to make such an effort but they have fallen drastically short of the application of such promises. The climate surveys show clear signs that the administration of this university is failing to make grad students feel welcome, included, heard, and respected and given that the graduate student population runs the research that makes this university so reputable it seems only right they make an effort to make the graduate experience either affordable or full of opportunities and events that are funded with these outrageous fees we pay.</p>
Elaine Metz	Student	<p>I am a graduate student at VT and I frequently struggle to make ends meet due to the cost of fees. I believe that I provide essential services to the university. I create unique and publishable research. I educate undergraduates and invest my time into making sure they attain a high level of education. Increases in my pay have been very helpful, but the subsequent increases in the fees that I pay will and the cost of living in Blacksburg completely erase these incremental raises. 14% of my income goes towards fees (excluding health insurance costs). Please consider the impact that these increases have on the graduate students who provide a substantial part of the labor that keeps VT a competitive research and learning institution.</p>

Commentor Name	Affiliation	Comment
Emilie Helmbold	Student	<p>Dear Board of Visitors,</p> <p>I am a member of the Graduate Labor Union of Virginia Tech. Graduate students at Virginia Tech are under immense pressure, both academically and financially. A major source of this financial pressure is our university course fees, which come to approximately \$5,000 a year. Even if I opt to pay my course fees monthly rather than all at once, it comes to \$500. Often, I have to decide between buying groceries or paying for a specialist doctor's appointment at the end of the month. I've had to decide whether to pay for car repairs or turn on the heat in my apartment. I have had to memorize the hours of operation for every food pantry in the Blacksburg area, because Virginia Tech will not pay their graduate instructors a living wage. This is without the course fee increase.</p> <p>There isn't a graduate student on campus who can afford for the course fees to rise by another 2.9% in this coming academic year. This comes to a total of \$145, and on top of the rising cost of living and housing in Montgomery County, rising gas prices, and rising food costs it is unreasonable for graduate students, like myself, to make ends meet at the end of every month. For this reason, I implore you to reconsider raising the course fees for the 2026-2027 academic year.</p> <p>Regards</p> <p>Emilie Helmbold</p>
Shreyas	Student	<p>Consider halting any increases/ removing comprehensive fees entirely for graduate students on a GTA/GRA contract. PhDs in particular form the backbone of the university, driving both teaching and research, and are essentially long-term employees of the university. However, they are not even guaranteed 12 months of funding per year. Removing these fees will improve the living situation of all PhDs, bringing their effective stipend closer to a living wage (currently, it is not even at the level of minimum wage based on a 40 hour work week). In particular, international students will be greatly benefitted since they cannot work beyond their GTA/GRA contract during the semester, and bear significantly higher costs of living (visa fees, travel back home, etc.).</p>
Bria Weisz	Student	<p>I urge the Board to consider a 0% increase, as raising fees will impose a financial burden on graduate students. To maintain the academic excellence that Virginia Tech, educational accessibility and affordability is paramount -- including a 0% increase in fees. Many students already live paycheck to paycheck, and an increase of fees may pose too large a financial burden to bear. I personally have already budgeted for the existing fee rate, and know that a fee increase would upend my existing plans.</p> <p>Again, I strongly urge the board to not raise fees at all.</p>
Kendall Seibel	Student	<p>I urge the Board to consider a 0% increase, as raising fees will impose a financial burden on graduate students. To maintain the academic excellence that Virginia Tech, educational accessibility and affordability is paramount -- including a 0% increase in fees. Many students already live paycheck to paycheck, and an increase of fees may pose too large a financial burden to bear. I personally have already budgeted for the existing fee rate, and know that a fee increase would upend my existing plans.</p> <p>Again, I strongly urge the board to not raise fees at all.</p>
Madysen Moreno	Student	<p>I urge the Board to consider a 0% increase, as raising fees will impose a financial burden on graduate students. To maintain the academic excellence that Virginia Tech, educational accessibility and affordability is paramount -- including a 0% increase in fees. As a young professional who has been financially independent since I was 18 years old, my academic achievement and degrees have been earned through my hard work alone. Scholarships, financial aid, and working multiple jobs is the only way I survive day-to-day, and raising fees for facilities that I don't use because I have no time to utilize them is inequitable, unfair, and ethically wrong. An institution like Virginia Tech should not put its financial burden on students and young professionals who live paycheck to paycheck, struggle to afford groceries, and can barely make ends meet in general. I am confident that VT can find other resources to bolster any necessary fee/tuition increases without poaching from students.</p>
Kelsey Jennings	Student	<p>I support a 0% fee increase. Due to inflation, most students have effectively experienced a 2.4% decrease in real income. Imposing an additional 2.9% increase in fees would place an undue financial burden on them.</p>
Kelley Langhans	Faculty/Staff	<p>I support a 0% fee increase for students. The students already receive quite low salaries, and due to inflation most have effectively experienced a decrease in income already this past year.</p>
Izzy Fraser-Milewsky	Student	<p>I am a graduate student at Virginia Tech. I support a 0% increase in tuition and fees. Due to inflation, most students have effectively experienced a 2.4% decrease in real income over the last year. Imposing an additional increase in fees would place an undue financial burden on students.</p>
Bernard Moussad	Student	<p>I've spoken to many of my fellow grad students. While we've seen some percentage of raises over the last few semesters, the increase in fees has made that raise negligible. If we're truly expected to be able to live off of our stipends, then the raises should be able to be directed toward living expenses instead of tuition and fees.</p>

Commentor Name	Affiliation	Comment
Marisa London	Student	Charging fees that are not proportionate to the number of credit hours is a regressive and inequitable policy. I am a graduate student who has to work full-time to support my family. As such, I am only able to take 1 class per term. Each term I get charged a \$500 engineering fee. I will pay 3-4 times the amount in fees that a full time student will pay by the time I graduate because it is taking me longer to complete my degree. Students who cannot afford to take classes full-time pay more for their degree because of these fees. I don't think the additional number of semesters I take courses justifies the THOUSANDS of dollars more that I will pay. Raising the flat fees only exacerbates this problem. Moreover, scholarships often don't cover fees. I pay for these fees out of pocket. If you need to raise money, make the increase proportionate to the amount of credit hours a student takes.
NULL	Student	Living costs (Rent, food, bills,...) have all skyrocketed for the student community. The extra \$160 could represent the difference between a student being able to feed themselves and not. I believe that the current economic circumstances dictate that we protect the most financially vulnerable population, the student population, from any extra financial burdens
Ishtiaque Ahmed Khan	Student	Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback. I respectfully urge the Board to consider a 0% tuition increase. As an international graduate student, the cost of attending is already difficult to manage. International students are ineligible for most federal loans and many funding opportunities, which significantly limits our financial flexibility. Additionally, the ongoing housing shortage in Blacksburg has led to rising rental costs. The combined effect of increasing living expenses and higher tuition would place a substantial burden on international students. For these reasons, I strongly encourage the Board to take these challenges into account when making its decision.
Niteya Shah	Student	I am writing to express concern about rising tuition. While student stipends have increased, these adjustments are far outpaced by tuition hikes, leaving many worse off financially. This is particularly difficult for PhD students, who already face heavy workloads and limited funding opportunities. The growing gap between compensation and cost adds significant strain and makes it harder to sustain their studies. I urge the Board to consider the impact of these increases on graduate students.
Anyanka Beichner	Student	I think it should be taken into account that the current administration under President Trump has made it harder to take out loans. Inflation is mentioned as the reason for tuition increase, yet inflation is currently increasing at a rapid rate due to actions committed by the administration in relation to actions they have taken against foreign countries rather than the natural rate in years past.
Hannah Davenport	Student	I urge the Board to consider a 0% increase, or at minimum, to keep any increase as low as possible. As a graduate student and serving in my role as a student senator, I have the responsibility of representing and advocating for my peers. Financial stability is already a significant challenge for many students. Additional increases place a heavier burden on those balancing rigorous academic demands with limited income and rising living costs. Maintaining affordability is essential to ensuring that higher education remains accessible to all students, regardless of their financial background. From both my personal experience and conversations with fellow students, increases in tuition and fees directly impact our ability to manage basic expenses such as housing, transportation, and educational resources. Even small increases accumulate and create added stress that can affect academic performance and overall well-being. Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective and for your consideration of student concerns.
Juanita Benjamin	Student	I urge the Board to consider a 0% increase. As a graduate student living on a graduate stipend, the current fees take out a lot of money, besides the other bills that need to be paid. So, an increase in tuition and fees will put a heavier financial burden on us. Thank you for your consideration.
Daniela Menendez	Student	As a graduate student who lives, works, and studies in Winchester, VA, the new student fee increases will drastically decrease my quality of life and make my education prohibitively more expensive, even with the reduced fees I pay from being off-campus. I would like to see a detailed breakdown of what all of my student fees are going to, and why.
Kelsey Jennings	Student	I support a 0% fee increase. Due to inflation, most students have effectively experienced a 2.4% decrease in real income over the last year. Imposing an additional 2.9% increase in fees would place an undue financial burden on students. Additionally, due to federal grant cancellations, many of our labs have fewer resources, limiting scheduled raises to not keep pace with inflation year over year, creating more financial burdens for graduate students.

Commentor Name	Affiliation	Comment
Darby McPhail	Student	As a graduate student that already struggles to pay fees and insurance on our below living wage salary, I urge the Board to consider a 0% increase. These fees are already a financial burden on us so increasing them further solidifies that the board does not care about our wellbeing. Please take our comments into consideration as dissatisfaction is growing and thank you or your time.
Katherine Skarda	Student	I urge the Board to consider a 0% increase. Placing the financial burden on grad students will only make the programs less accessible for Virginians looking to improve their ability to contribute meaningfully in either the industry or research sector. Higher tuition and fees makes the students bear the weight of change when we already juggle our own degree financing. Personally, I was able to make the decision to get a MEng because of the low in-state tuition, along with scholarship aid and an accelerated degree timeline. Thank you for your time and attention.
Steven Woodrum	Student	Please do not increase tuition or fees, or lower the increase. Thank you for your consideration.
Griffin Matthews	Student	Everything is too expensive already—we can't afford another raise to course fees! And to give more money to a football coach? No! If you care about us the students, you'll REJECT any raise to course fees at this BOV meeting.
Athan Anderson	Student	I am writing today to urge you to consider a 0% increase in tuition and fees. As a masters student, I make pennies while trying to afford the exorbitant prices of housing, groceries, and especially student fees. The amount grad students have to pay in fees is outrageous, especially since we use campus facilities the least. An increase in fees would be unjust. As a grad student, I get my tuition paid for by the school, but as tuitions raise, fewer grad students are being admitted into these labs with limited and cut funding. On top of that, the labs having to pay for more tuition reduces the amount of money in raises that can go to us grad students. Being in the wildlife conservation field, future money-making prospects are limited--a fact which i have come to terms with. Any assumptions that a masters degree will raise my ultimate wage after school and therefore increased tuitions shouldn't be an issue over time are unfounded. I thank you for allowing me to say my piece today.
Brandy Barrow	Student	Please don't raise the cost of graduate education. Things are already unaffordable for students in Blacksburg and increasing the cost of tuition is going to cause additional financial strain on graduate students. Recruitment is down. Enrollment is down. No increases in tuition could be the reason why someone comes to VT instead of somewhere else even more expensive. Please consider several alternatives to be more fiscally responsible before putting the burden of additional cost on students.
Ummay Sumaya Khan	Student	Prices of all the things are growing high. Living near DC area is very expensive. It will be very difficult situation for Graduate students.
Shadab Mahboob	Student	As an international Ph.D. student at Virginia Tech, I am concerned that any increase in tuition or mandatory fees would add further financial pressure to graduate students who are already managing a high cost of living and academic expenses. Even a modest increase can make a meaningful difference in budgeting for housing, transportation, health-related costs, and daily needs. While I understand the university's effort to balance affordability with institutional priorities, changes in tuition and fees can have a direct impact on students like me, especially those who do not have the same financial flexibility or family support available locally.
Ainul Huda	Student	I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed increases in mandatory non-E&G fees for the 2026–27 academic year. While I understand that these fees are intended to support important areas such as employee compensation, student services, and campus infrastructure, shifting these costs onto students through increases of up to \$160 places an additional financial burden on those already managing rising living expenses and limited funding. In particular, requiring students to subsidize areas such as Intercollegiate Athletics through mandatory fees may not reflect the needs or priorities of the entire student body, especially graduate and professional students. I respectfully urge the Board of Visitors to reconsider these increases and to seek alternative funding strategies that do not further raise the cost of attendance for students. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Commentor Name	Affiliation	Comment
Syed Ibrahim Mustafa Shah Bukhari	Student	The increase in stipends for graduate students has been ineffective in the face of the aggressively rising cost of living and the increasing comprehensive fee. Increasing the tuition fee would add a burden on the already uneven playing field for students like me and would pose a threat to our well-being (mental and physical as food insecurity would enhance). I would request the board to consider a \$0 increase in tuition fee to ease the pressure off of students.
Sophia Vrh	Student	The proposed increase in student fees for the 2026-2027 school year puts an undue burden on graduate students who, like myself, already make a yearly salary below the Virginia poverty line for a family of four. Additionally, VT's graduate student fees are already higher than most universities; therefore, increasing them further puts our school's graduate students and an even further financial disadvantage. Please consider decreasing the financial burden currently placed on graduate students.
Alana Hutchinson	Student	<p>I am a PhD student writing to express my opposition to the proposed increases in mandatory non-E&G fees for the 2026–27 academic year.</p> <p>While I understand that these fees are intended to support important areas such as employee compensation, student services, and campus infrastructure, shifting these costs onto students through increases of up to \$160 places an additional financial burden on those already managing rising living expenses and limited funding.</p> <p>In particular, requiring students to subsidize areas such as Intercollegiate Athletics through mandatory fees may not reflect the needs or priorities of the entire student body, especially graduate and professional students.</p> <p>I respectfully urge the Board of Visitors to reconsider these increases and to seek alternative funding strategies that do not further raise the cost of attendance for students.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration.</p>
Marissa Incer	Student	<p>I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed increases in mandatory non-E&G fees for the 2026–27 academic year.</p> <p>While I understand that these fees are intended to support important areas such as employee compensation, student services, and campus infrastructure, shifting these costs onto students through increases of up to \$160 places an additional financial burden on those already managing rising living expenses and limited funding.</p> <p>In particular, requiring students to subsidize areas such as Intercollegiate Athletics through mandatory fees may not reflect the needs or priorities of the entire student body, especially graduate and professional students.</p> <p>I respectfully urge the Board of Visitors to reconsider these increases and to seek alternative funding strategies that do not further raise the cost of attendance for students.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration.</p>
Kennedy Kreidell	Student	<p>Hello,</p> <p>Fees at this institution for graduate students are already outrageous. The university takes back over 10% of our yearly income, more than 3 months of rent for most graduate students. For myself, the proposed fees will put me out of being able to afford housing as it costs OVER 3 months of rent to pay for these fees. Many students who pay less than I do in rent will be out of 5+ months of rent. Cost of living in Blacksburg is on a continuous rise and the stipends that graduate students receive cannot keep up with these increases, especially when their main enemy is their own employer choosing to make their lives more difficult and force them into poverty.</p>

Commentor Name	Affiliation	Comment
Sarah Zhang	Student	<p>I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed increases in mandatory non-E&G fees for the 2026–27 academic year.</p> <p>While I understand that these fees are intended to support important areas such as employee compensation, student services, and campus infrastructure, shifting these costs onto students through increases of up to \$160 places an additional financial burden on those already managing rising living expenses and limited funding.</p> <p>In particular, requiring students to subsidize areas such as Intercollegiate Athletics through mandatory fees may not reflect the needs or priorities of the entire student body, especially graduate and professional students.</p> <p>I respectfully urge the Board of Visitors to reconsider these increases and to seek alternative funding strategies that do not further raise the cost of attendance for students.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration.</p>
Taylor Peele	Student	<p>There is a concern regarding students on assistantships. It is understood that comprehensive fees are not covered by the assistantship, which leads students to seek additional scholarships. In previous years, students have reported that their external scholarships were applied to the tuition portion covered by the school, rather than to the comprehensive fees. As a result, students were left with out-of-pocket expenses that they had hoped would be covered by these scholarships. Given the increasing fees and the ongoing need for students to apply for scholarships, how will this issue be addressed in the future?</p>
Charity Majusiak	Student	<p>There is no clear or definitive reason as to why fees and tuition are being raised. This is a clear demonstration of making university unaffordable, especially to graduate students who are faced with these proposed increased fees and do not receive the same benefits that these “fees” are funding. There are VT graduate students who are barely making it by with their currently stipend, and raising these fees would cause a lot more harm and stress to the community. This would devastate so many housemates across Blacksburg. This is shameful.</p>
Beamlak Kuma	Student	<p>I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed increases in mandatory non-E&G fees for the 2026–27 academic year.</p> <p>While I understand that these fees are intended to support important areas such as employee compensation, student services, and campus infrastructure, shifting these costs onto students through increases of up to \$160 places an additional financial burden on those already managing rising living expenses and limited funding.</p> <p>In particular, requiring students to subsidize areas such as Intercollegiate Athletics through mandatory fees may not reflect the needs or priorities of the entire student body, especially graduate and professional students.</p> <p>I respectfully urge the Board of Visitors to reconsider these increases and to seek alternative funding strategies that do not further raise the cost of attendance for students.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration.</p>
Lydia Qualls	Faculty/Staff	<p>At the public comment session, it was mentioned that the fee increase was planned to take place before the state budget was set for this year, and we are asking for more funding from the state, as it is below 2001 levels controlling for inflation. I think it would make sense to wait to raise fees/tuition until we find out if we can get more funding from the state.</p>
Amirreza Arabameri	Student	<p>I kindly request that the 'Comprehensive Fee' be reduced or fully waived for fully funded graduate students.</p>
William Mitchell	Student	<p>I would encourage the Board to refrain from increasing tuition as it is already expensive and things just keep getting more expensive every where.</p>
Elderen Lee	Student	<p>Please do not increase the tuition or fees, as it will make it significantly more difficult for me and many others to afford attending the school.</p> <p>I am already maximizing my financial aid and loans while working multiple part-time jobs to cover the current tuition and living expenses. An increase in tuition and fees would add considerable strain, making it even harder for me to focus my energy and time on academics and future career planning, as I should be doing.</p> <p>I implore you to reconsider the message this will send, and the impact it will have on Virginia Tech's culture, its legacy, its mission, and the lives of its students.</p>

Commentor Name	Affiliation	Comment
NULL	None	<p>I would like the board to explain a few items regarding fees. The first being the purpose of having a pay scale for graduate students when fees increase every year. The pay scale is used for when graduate students advance in their degree timelines, with increasing pay as you gain experience and pass milestones. But with increasing fees of \$100-200 per semester each year, it negates the raises almost entirely and we are all left making the same amount. As this has happened in previous years, there seems to be a cycle of students getting a small \$300-400 year raise that is negated by the increase in fees. Graduate students have to use semester-long payment plans just to pay fees, which makes the exchange feel redundant. You aren't actually paying us any more to charge us for facilities and services that most graduate students don't use or benefit from. The second item would be why does VT brag a competitive stipend for graduate students, but take about \$3,000-4,000 in fees and about \$1,000 in healthcare every year to have healthcare beyond the overcrowded undergraduate healthcare system? Competitors may have lower stipends, but at least all fees and health needs tend to be covered and don't force graduate students, many of whom are international students who don't know how to navigate the U.S. healthcare system, to navigate these complex systems in tandem with the University's own complex system from scratch to try and receive care. In short, after taking ~15% of net pay in fees and expenses, you pay graduate students a salary ~1.8x the poverty line. The average rent for a 1 bedroom apartment is \$1,300/month, which is 56% of that post-fee income, not including utilities, insurance, groceries, or loan payments. Looking forward to hearing your thoughts.</p>
Gokulakrishnan Ravi	Student	<p>I come from an underprivileged background, and I had initially applied for a thesis-based program but was later transferred to the MEng program in Computer Science. The tuition is already quite high compared to similar universities such as Georgia Tech and UVA, and if it continues to increase, it will become a serious burden for many students, especially international students.</p> <p>It is already very difficult for most of us to secure jobs, and many of us are studying through tuition loans. I kindly request that the university consider providing more scholarships and hardship-based financial support rather than increasing the burden on students.</p> <p>I am not sure how this message will be received, as written words may not fully convey the speaker's intention, but this is a humble and sincere request. Many underprivileged students are trying to build a better future despite significant hardships, and I strongly believe that education should never become one of those hardships.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
Christopher Lee	Student	<p>I don't want an increase to my fees. I already have a lot of financial burden as a graduate research assistant. The cost of living has increased and the wage supposedly does, but these continued increases to comprehensive fees negates any perceived raise. I pay ridiculous costs for services I do not utilize such as football games. I'm sure many other grad students feel the same sentiment and are financially affected to the detriment of our ability to provide scholarly contributions.</p>
Nicholas Markland	Student	<p>I am writing to express concern regarding the proposed tuition and mandatory fee increases for the 2026-27 academic year. As both an alumnus and a current graduate student, I have experienced this institution from multiple perspectives, and affordability remains a consistent and critical issue across both.</p> <p>Even modest percentage increases can have a disproportionate impact on graduate students, many of whom rely on fixed stipends, limited external funding, or personal savings to support their education and living expenses. Graduate students already face significant financial pressures, including rising housing costs, healthcare expenses, and inflation-driven increases in daily living costs. Any additional financial burden risks reducing accessibility, increasing student debt, and negatively affecting academic performance and well-being.</p> <p>I strongly encourage the Board to prioritize affordability by minimizing or avoiding increases where possible. If adjustments are deemed necessary, consideration should be given to offsetting measures such as increased stipends, expanded financial aid, or targeted support for the most financially vulnerable students.</p> <p>Maintaining affordability is critical not only for current students but also for ensuring that graduate programs remain accessible to a diverse and talented pool of future applicants. Thank you for considering student perspectives in this decision.</p>

Commentor Name	Affiliation	Comment
Pooja Bhagawat	Student	<p>Dear BOV,</p> <p>The proposed increases in tuition and fees would make graduate education less affordable for many students. On behalf of all graduate and professional students, I respectfully request that these increases be kept at zero or, at the very least, minimum.</p> <p>I also anticipate that athletic fees will rise over the next three years. Many graduate and professional students, given their demanding workloads, do not attend athletic events and therefore do not receive the "direct" benefits from these fees, as also noted by Katie, the BOV representative, in the September 30, 2025 meeting. The benefits we receive are primarily "indirect", including the enhanced university branding, reputation, and contributions to the development of the NRV region.</p> <p>I request that consideration be given to sharing the financial responsibility more broadly with other members of the university, such as faculty and A/P faculty, who also receive these "indirect" benefits. Their contributions toward the anticipated increase in athletic expenditures would have a relatively small impact on their incomes while significantly reducing the burden on students.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to provide a comment.</p> <p>Sincerely, Pooja Bhagawat President, Graduate and Professional Student Senate</p>
Kevin Loi	Student	I am strongly against raising tuition costs and fee increases for Virginia Tech
NULL	None	Requesting a 0% fees increase!
NULL	None	0% fee increase! Support quality of life for students!
Siyi Liu	None	Please do not increase the comprehensive fee! I beg you :). This means a lot to grad students!! Thank you so much. Just please do not increase the comprehensive fee again.
Caitlin Shamiya	Student	Please don't do this to us and our graduate community. There are expenses that graduate students simply cannot afford as it is. If we increase fees on students, we are going to be forced to work.
Shuvro Das	Student	Graduate students are already in a precarious situation. It's a common knowledge that as graduate students we don't make much. So, affordability is a big and recurring question for so us. Many of us struggle to make the both ends meet. Any increase in tuitions and/or E&G fees will negatively impact us. The costs are already skyrocketed and it'll have a detrimental effect on us if the fees are raised. For example- rent is almost unaffordable in the area and many graduate students have to rely on food pantries-- which is heartbreaking. I firmly believe that the BOV has our best interest in their mind. So, I would humbly request the body to think about the gravity of the situation and vote no to any increase. Thank you so much.
Andrew Gunsch	Student	<p>Hi there,</p> <p>I am calling on the Board to vote for a Zero Percent increase in Tuition and Fees this year.</p> <p>I recognize that Virginia Tech's fees and stipends are similar to those of comparable institutions in the Commonwealth. And I do appreciate this.</p> <p>However, not being worse than one's competition does not mean that it is enough.</p> <p>Thank you for taking the time to listen to our comments.</p> <p>And, as an aside, I am sorry for the loss of Sandra Davis.</p>
Isa de la Rosa	Student	requesting that they vote for a 0% fee increase. The amount of fee that we pay as a student is incredibly high, especially for the amount of students that attend this university. How are you going to raise tuition and students fee, and barely increase our pay as a GTA.
Alessandra Fehrman-Prestipino	None	Please do not raise fees. Keep VT accessible. As a fully remote student there are lots of services that I do not get to take advantage of, so paying additional money is an unnecessary burden. Thanks!