

**Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is comply with the requirements of § 23.1-307(E) of the Code of Virginia. Virginia law requires that prior to any vote relative to an increase in undergraduate tuition or mandatory fees, the University shall permit public comment on the proposed increase at a meeting of the governing board, the Board of Visitors of Virginia State University (“Visitors” or “the Board”). In addition, the law provides that the Board establish a policy for the public comment process that includes reasonable time limitations.

**Authority, Responsibility, and Duties**

This policy governs the conduct of the Board and University employees including faculty, administrators, staff, students, and visitors to the campus of Virginia State University. The Board or their designees must approve any exceptions in the application or enforcement of this policy. The Rector of the Board of Visitors or his/her designee is responsible for the official interpretation of this policy. Questions regarding the application of this policy should be directed to the Board Liaison.

**Definitions**

**Public Comment:** the opportunity for the public to address the Board of Visitors.

**Speaker:** individual who seeks to make a public comment, or submit a written comment, to the Board and its members.

**Meeting:** gathering or working sessions of the Board of Visitors in which public business is being discussed or transacted. These working sessions or gatherings may be held through the physical sitting of the body or through electronic communications pursuant to Va. Code § 2.2-3708.2.

**Tuition:** the semester, or term charges and fees imposed by the University for instruction.

**Mandatory Fees (Comprehensive Fees):** the mandatory semester or term fees assessed by and imposed on each full-time student for non-educational and non-general costs.

**Policy Statements**

The Board of Virginia State University will permit public comment on any proposed increase in undergraduate tuition or mandatory fees at an open and public meeting of the Board. The Board will determine the dates of any public comment period and consider reasonable time limitations for public comment. The Administration will provide a

statement and general information about the proposed increase and distribute to the VSU Community prior to any public comment period.

**Public Comment Period Process**

Upon consideration of any proposed undergraduate tuition or mandatory fees increase, the Board or a Board subcommittee meeting will set a period of public comment prior to the Board's vote regarding tuition and mandatory fees increases. This public comment period will be held at least 30 days prior to the Board's vote on tuition and fees. Public notice will be given as required by law. Instructions for submitting public comment will be included in the public notice.

At least three (3) Board members will be present for the public comment period including the Rector or Vice Rector and members of the Facilities, Finance and Audit Committee. Those individuals who desire to speak before the Board must adhere to the following guidelines:

- 1) Complete the electronic pre-registration form;
- 2) Submit the pre-registration form to the Board Liaison at least seven (7) business days prior to the scheduled Board meeting;
- 3) Limit remarks to a three (3) minute statement; and
- 4) Provide a written copy of the speaker's comments to the Board Secretary.

Speakers must pre-register on a first-come, first served basis for the public comment period. Speakers will be asked to specify their affiliation, if any, with the University.

All remarks before the VSU Board of Visitors must be relevant to the proposed increase in undergraduate tuition or mandatory fees. The public comment period will be limited to one (1) hour.

Written comments may be submitted to the Board Secretary in lieu of oral comments at the meeting. These written comments will also be accepted from the date that the public notice is issued until seven (7) days prior to the meeting at which the Board considers tuition and fee increases. These written comments may be submitted in hard copy, via email, or online. Instructions for written comments will be included in the public notice.

There will be dedicated time slot(s) for the Student Government Representative to provide a statement on behalf of the students. This does not preclude individual students from registering to speak during the public comment period or from providing written comments.

Virginia State University  
Policies Manual

Title: Public Comment Policy

Policy: 1006

If time remains after the pre-registered speakers offer their comments, additional speakers may be offered the opportunity to speak during the remaining time.

All comments will become a part of the public record. The Board will not respond to oral or written comments.

**Obligations and Responsibilities:**

All public comment speakers are responsible for conducting themselves professionally and in a manner consistent with this policy. Additionally, the Board of Visitors will periodically review the public comment policy and procedures, re-evaluate the time allotted for public comment based on demand, and modify this policy and procedures as appropriate.

Public Comment will be managed by the Board Liaison in consultation with the Board Secretary and the Rector. The University will submit all public comment related to proposed increases in undergraduate tuition or mandatory fees to the State Council of Higher Education (SCHEV) by July 1 of each year.

**References:**

§ 23.1-307(D)(E). Public institutions of higher education; tuition and fees.

§ 2.2-3708.2. Meetings held through electronic communication means.

§ 2.2-3701. Definitions (Virginia Freedom of Information Act).

§ 2.2-3707. Meetings to be public; notice of meetings; recordings; minutes.

Approval By: \_\_\_\_\_



Rector

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

11/15/19