

Resolution 2021-22N
Resolution to Establish Non-Class Holiday Status for Juneteenth

Recommended for approval by the Commission on Undergraduate Studies & Policies:

First Reading:

Faculty Senate:

AP Faculty Senate:

Staff Senate:

Graduate and Professional Student Senate:

Undergraduate Student Senate:

Second Reading:

Approved by University Council:

Approved by the President:

Effective Date: Summer 2022

WHEREAS, Juneteenth recognizes the profound significance of June 19, 1865, the day the last enslaved Americans learned that they had been freed by the Emancipation Proclamation, which had been signed more than two years earlier; and

WHEREAS, while Juneteenth marked the end of slavery, it was only the beginning of a long, arduous struggle for freedom and equality by African-Americans that continues to this day; and

WHEREAS, in 2020 and again in 2021, President Sands issued Presidential Policy Memoranda declaring that Virginia Tech would observe Juneteenth as a paid holiday for all eligible faculty and staff with classes canceled and the university closed, stating that “Juneteenth offers an opportunity for us to educate ourselves about our history, listen to and learn from others, and, most importantly, determine what actions Virginia Tech can take to create a community that is free of hate, violence, and racism as envisioned by our Principles of Community”; and

WHEREAS, in October 2020, the Governor of Virginia signed into law legislation passed during the General Assembly 2020 special session making Juneteenth a permanent, statewide holiday for eligible state employees; and

WHEREAS, on June 17, 2021, Juneteenth became a federal holiday when the President of the United States signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act into law; and

WHEREAS, as had been the case with MLK Day and Labor Day, for the commemoration of Juneteenth at Virginia Tech to continue on a permanent basis with classes canceled and the university closed, the Presidential Policy Memoranda stated that a formal resolution must be brought forward through the university governance system following the normal process; and

Whereas, in the 2021-22 Faculty Handbook ratified by the Board of Visitors on August 31, 2021, Juneteenth was inadvertently included as a faculty holiday before a resolution had gone through the governance process;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that recognizing the significance of Juneteenth, beginning in 2022, Virginia Tech will commemorate Juneteenth each year by canceling classes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the University Academic Calendar Criteria as established in Presidential Policy Memorandum No. 228 will be revised accordingly and all other criteria will remain unchanged.