Graduate Student Senate

Resolution 10.19.2026.1

A Resolution Calling for Transparency and Internal Representation in University Collective Bargaining

Sponsor(s): Collin A. Coil, President of the GSS
Date Introduced: October 26, 2026

WHEREAS, the Graduate Student Senate (GSS) is the elected representative body of graduate students at the University of Vermont (UVM), many of whom work alongside, study under, and are supported by UVM faculty and staff; and

WHEREAS, the University bargains collectively with numerous campus unions, including United Academics (full-time and part-time faculty), UVM Staff United (clerical, technical, specialized, and professional staff), the United Electrical Workers (service and maintenance employees), the New England Police Benevolent Association (police officers, service officers, and dispatchers), and Graduate Students United (graduate student employees); and

WHEREAS, the fair and timely negotiation of these agreements affects the wages, benefits, and working conditions of thousands of members of the UVM community, as well as the quality of the education, research, and services that UVM provides to its students; and

WHEREAS, public testimony before the Vermont Legislature has reported that UVM spent approximately $135,000 in a single year on an outside national law firm in connection with bargaining with UVM Staff United; and

WHEREAS, UVM has spent more than $1,000,000 on outside legal counsel in connection with its negotiations with Graduate Students United; and

WHEREAS, no comprehensive public accounting of University spending on outside labor counsel is currently available to the UVM community; and

WHEREAS, *Our Common Ground*, endorsed by the UVM Board of Trustees, commits the University community to the values of respect, integrity, innovation, openness, justice, and responsibility, and affirms that through collaboration and participation each member of the community has a role in determining its direction; and

WHEREAS, placing outside attorneys, rather than members of the UVM community, at the bargaining table is inconsistent with these values, as it substitutes an adversarial legal posture for the

direct dialogue, mutual respect, and shared responsibility that *Our Common Ground* calls for, and does not reflect the University's character as a community; and

WHEREAS, the University's strategic plan, *Green, Gold, and Bold*, identifies the University's people as its most crucial asset and commits UVM to a mindset of stewardship, collaboration, and transparency; and

WHEREAS, *Green, Gold, and Bold* further calls on the University to strengthen collaboration, shared governance, and respect across the institution, and to invest strategically and transparently in the people who advance its mission; and

WHEREAS, *Green, Gold, and Bold* commits the University to improving affordability for students, and substantial expenditures on outside legal counsel divert resources that could otherwise support students, faculty, and staff; and

WHEREAS, UVM faculty and staff possess knowledge of the University's academic mission and operations, and are well positioned to represent the institution at the bargaining table; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Graduate Student Senate calls on the UVM administration to publicly disclose its annual expenditures on outside legal counsel related to collective bargaining, organized by union, for each of the past five fiscal years; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Graduate Student Senate calls on the UVM administration to remove any outside legal counsel currently serving as a member of a University bargaining team, to staff all bargaining teams with internal UVM personnel, and to limit any outside legal counsel strictly to an advisory role away from the bargaining table; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Graduate Student Senate calls on the UVM administration to bargain with all campus unions in good faith, consistent with *Our Common Ground* and *Green, Gold, and Bold*, toward the prompt conclusion of fair agreements; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the President of the Graduate Student Senate shall transmit a copy of this resolution to the President of the University, the Provost, the Dean of the Graduate College, the Board of Trustees, the Faculty Senate, and the Staff Council.

Collin Coil

Adopted by the Graduate Student Senate on: October 26, 2026
President, Graduate Student Senate