



# **BOARD OF VISITORS**

**EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

**12 SEPTEMBER 2023**



# VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE

LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA 24450-0304

Board of Visitors  
External Relations Committee  
September 12, 2023  
Agenda

1. Welcome (Hugh Fain '80)
2. Approval of April 2023 Minutes
3. S5 Report (Cadet Noah Campbell '24)
4. Government Relations Update (Brig. Gen. Clark / Col. Parker / Col. Boobar)
  - a. McGuireWoods Consulting Report
  - b. Six Year Plan Presentation
  - c. Special Session on the FY 24 Budget (no read ahead)
  - d. Fall Visits
  - e. November Elections (no read ahead)
  - f. Funding Priorities for the General Assembly Session
  - g. General Assembly Key Dates
  - h. Pell Grant Initiative Funding
  - i. Local Government Relations
5. Communications & Marketing Update (Col. Wyatt)
  - a. C&M Year-End Report
  - b. 2023-24 VMI Strategic Communications Plan
  - c. 2023-24 VMI Alumni Agencies Communications Plan (Amy Goetz)
6. Museum Update (Col. Gibson)



**BOARD OF VISITORS  
MINUTES OF THE EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

April 28, 2023

Present: Ms. Lara Tyler Chambers '03  
Mr. Hugh M. Fain III '80, Committee Chair  
Mr. Thomas E. Gottwald '83  
Ms. Meaghan Mobbs  
Mr. Eugene Scott Jr. '80

Others: Ms. Maggie Beckman '23, S5 Captain  
Col. Jeff Boobar '86, Finance and Support  
Brig. Gen. Dallas Clark '99, Deputy Superintendent FAS  
Maj. Michelle Ellwood, Communications and Marketing  
Col. Keith Gibson '77, VMI Museums System  
Ms. Amy Goetz, Alumni Agencies  
Col. Kim Parker, Government Relations Officer  
Mr. David Sigler, Financial Analyst  
Ms. Betty Skillman, VMI Museums  
Col. Bill Wyatt, Communications and Marketing

The meeting was called to order at 1638 hours in the Smith Hall boardroom by Mr. Fain.

1. Review of the January 2023 External Relations Committee Minutes:

Mr. Scott moved the minutes be approved as presented, the motion was seconded by Ms. Mobbs and approved by the committee.

2. Review Charter:

Mr. Fain asked the committee to review the charter to be reminded of the committee's responsibilities before moving forward in discussion.

3. Reports:

***Cadet S5 Report.***

- (1) Ms. Beckman, S5 captain for the 22-23 academic year, discussed the spring semester recruiting initiatives:
  - a. There were three admissions open houses – each got larger as the semester went on.
  - b. The S5 staff has given a number of tours this semester, many of those were school groups or special guest visitors.



- (2) The S5 staff supported the USIBA National Boxing Tournament by helping with directions or answering questions for guests on post.
- (3) She, along with others on the staff, have been calling prospective cadets to provide any guidance they need as they prepare to come to VMI. Some continue to reach out to her as they approach their matriculation.
- (4) The new S5 captain for the upcoming academic year is Noah Campbell '24. He will be focused on recruiting and open house efforts, as well as continuing to enhance the S5 reputation of being transparent with the public and the Corps. He wants to remind people that the S5 is a trained group, and not sugarcoating the VMI story.

### ***Government Relations Report.***

- (1) Col. Kim Parker highlighted items in the McGuire Woods Consulting Report. There is significant attrition in the senate and house of delegates, many due to retiring and others either not seeking re-election or running for other positions. A tremendous loss of Institutional relationships made over the years. This includes Senator Tommy Norment '68. Several members of the board suggested looking at ways for the Institute to recognize Norment for his contributions.
- (2) For budget negotiations, there looks like there will be no action taken on the budget until after the democratic primary. Virginia runs on a two-year budget, so no action needs to be taken at this time.
- (3) The Higher Education Legislation report shared that all successful legislation will be effective on July 1, so Parker is working with any departments that will need to be compliant with any clauses.
- (4) For the six-year plan process, there have been some delays along the way. A consultant is developing a template that will be completed and submitted to the state.
- (5) Brig. Gen. Clark shared that Col. Jeff Boobar has returned to the Institute serving as senior director of finance and support, and will take over the duties of local government relations.
- (6) Col. Parker wrapped up the report by sharing how nice the Legislative Reception was and how well the cadets represented VMI.

### ***Communications and Marketing Report.***

- (1) Col. Wyatt shared that media relations efforts continue to share good news going on at VMI. While news items are down compared to the same time last year because of the high-profile news spikes over the last two years, the percentage of positive news stories have increased.
- (2) In branding, VMI receives royalties from items sold with the VMI logo. Those numbers are rising. That money is deposited into athletics and continues to be an opportunity for marketing.
- (3) New team members (social media specialist and videographer) are doing a great job. Fans continue to grow on social media platforms. Engagement on posts is down

(additional attention from news articles from past two years), but sentiment and on-topic comments are much better.

- (4) The new videographer is contributing to video-based social media content which do better than text or photo posts.
- (5) Regarding web traffic, there has been a big focus on cadet recruitment based on the updating landing pages and story content. Open house forms and other applicant pages are increasing and the virtual open houses are getting traffic.
- (6) There is an on-going process to allow VMI to place better in relevant searches (“military colleges,” for example) on search engines (SEO).
- (7) The Digital Boost Campaign is a focus on admissions yield and is in partnership with a consulting firm. Social media ads and banner ads on websites are being used. Click-thru rates are at the national average or above – most successful on Snap Chat.
- (8) FOIA requests are up to 55 for the year.

### ***Alumni Agencies Report.***

- (1) Amy Goetz shared that the Alumni Agencies continues a strong partnership with VMI’s communications and marketing department on good news stories and sharing them with the alumni audience, including a full-page ad in the Richmond Times-Dispatch and other publications on a Sunday in mid-March. This ad was written as an article, and shared many times as a news story.
- (2) Corps Connects videos are highlighting cadets – these videos are getting great views as they are emailed out and shared on social media platforms.
- (3) Regarding search engine optimization (SEO), they completed tests across the country to see what pops up in a Google results page when searching VMI. The goal of this branded content campaign is to push negative news stories down in the results across the country with sponsored stories. The digital versions of these stories go to a newly created webpage with many of the cadet videos.
- (4) There is discussion about Alumni Agencies assisting VMI with boosted posts on social media for more traffic.
- (5) A book about Gen. J.H. Binford Peay ’62 was completed and sent out to a list of donors. A digital version was also sent out to all alumni.

### ***VMI Museums System Report.***

- (1) Col. Keith Gibson shared that there has been an increase in involvement from other organizations partnering with the VMI Museum System on research, projects, and special events. Also, more VMI classes are using the museum system as part of their classwork.
- (2) Post tours continue with cadet assistants daily to anyone who would like one, often just casual visitors passing through.
- (3) Col. Gibson introduced Betty Skillman who is retiring from VMI after 25 years. Most recently, she was the visitors’ services supervisor. She coordinates the cadet assistant

schedule and their assignments. She has also expanded the museum store and the products supplied, which is great revenue for the museum operating budget.

There was no additional business discussed. The meeting adjourned at 1756.



**External Relations Committee  
Government Relations Agenda Items  
Tuesday, 12 September 2023**

1. McGuireWoods Consulting Report
2. Six Year Plan Presentation
3. Special Session on the FY 24 Budget (no read ahead)
4. Fall Visits
5. November Elections (no read ahead)
6. Funding Priorities for the General Assembly Session
7. General Assembly Key Dates
8. Pell Grant Initiative Funding
9. Local Government Relations



## **Fall 2023 Richmond Update**

### **2022-24 Budget**

While the General Assembly did end its Session on time, it did not complete its work on the budget. Before leaving town, they approved and the Governor has signed, a “skinny budget” which included amendments to the FY 2024 budget already adopted as part of the 2022-2024 budget in June 2022. Since then, the 15 budget conferees – 6 from the House and 9 from the Senate – have continued their conversations off and on, wanting to get past the primaries, and to also have a better sense of the federal budget debt ceiling outcome.

While there were some budget proposals shared between the House and Senate conferees, it was not until August 25<sup>th</sup> that the lead budget negotiators announced that they reached a deal. At the same time, they also announced that the details have yet to be worked out. However, it is promising to note that the letter from the lead House (Knight) and Senate (Barker and Howell) conferees suggest the deal includes additional resources for higher education. "In higher education, we are providing additional operating support to maintain college affordability and increased financial aid to ensure access is not limited due to family income."

Once a final conference committee report is produced, the members will return for a Special Session to approve the report. Governor Youngkin will also have the opportunity to weigh in on the conference report, including approving it outright, offering amendments, or vetoing the proposed budget deal. The Special Session has been set by the Governor for Sept. 6<sup>th</sup>.

### **Electoral Update**

This fall will be an important election for the future direction of the Commonwealth. With all 140 districts recently redrawn as a result of redistricting, known retirements, and losses of several members in paired districts, we will see an historic number of new members. That coupled with the loss – through retirement or lost elections - of senior members of both parties in key leadership positions will mean the legislature will look and be run very differently, regardless of which party holds which house. Currently the House has a majority of Republican members and the Senate a majority of Democrats. The coming election could bring a change to either or both, with important impacts on potential budget and policy actions.

### **Primary Results:**

The June primaries were held for the first time in the 140 newly drawn districts. And with historic results, especially in the Senate. Two senior sitting Democratic members of the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee (Barker and Petersen) lost their primaries. Also losing their primaries were Sen. Amanda Chase (R), Sen. Joe Morrissey (D), and Sen. Lionel Spruill (D). While on the House side, Del. Marie March (R) lost her primary bid.

### **General Election:**

The results of the June primaries have set up a very busy and expensive fall election season. Governor Youngkin and several republican legislative leaders are actively engaged in raising resources and supporting candidates on the campaign trail. Former Speaker Eileen-Filler Corn, among many others on the Democratic side, are working hard to get Democrats elected. That said, at the end of the day, there are a limited number of truly competitive seats. In the House, there are 15 seats that are less than +10% - 10 R seats and 5 D seats. And in the Senate there are just 8 seats that are less than +10%, with 4 R seats, 3 D seats and one toss-up. Even with just a few toss up races, the fall election outcome and its impact on control of the House and Senate is still very much in doubt.

### **2024 Session Brings New Leadership:**

With the General Assembly having a record-breaking number of new faces next January, leadership and committee chairs will look very different.

- House Committees that will see new Chairs –
  - Commerce and Energy (Byron - retired)
  - Courts of Justice (Rob Bell - retired)
  - Education (Davis – left for a job in the Administration)
  - Finance (Robinson – retired)
  - Privileges and Elections (Ransome - retired)
  - Communications, Technology, & Innovation (Brewer – won Senate primary)
- Speaker Todd Gilbert and Minority Leader Don Scott are likely to continue leading the Republicans and Democrats, respectively. However, it is unclear which party will emerge with the most seats in the House in November.
- Senate Leadership Changes –
  - Democratic Majority Leader Dick Saslaw (retired)
  - Republican Minority Leader Tommy Norment (retired)
- Senate Committees that will see new Chairs –
  - Privileges and Elections (Sпруill - lost his primary race)
  - Co-Chair Finance and Appropriations (Howell - retired)
  - Co-Chair Finance and Appropriations (Barker - lost his primary race)

- Judiciary (Edwards - retired)
  - Agriculture, Conservation & Natural Resources (Petersen - lost his primary race)
  - Local Government Committee (Lewis - retired)
  - Commerce and Labor (Saslaw – retired)
- No official announcement about Senate leadership is expected until after the election. However, Senator Louise Lucas will be the most senior Democratic member of the Senate. Sen. Frank Ruff will be the most Senior Republican in the body, followed by Senator Obenshain and Sen. McDougle, all three expected to win re-election in November.

***A few headlines:***

- A total of 12 of the 40 members of the Senate have announced their retirement
- 31 out of 100 House members have retired or are running for another office
- Come next January more than 70 House members will have served 4 years or less in office
- For the Senate nearly half will have four or less years in the body
- Nine of the total 16 members of the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee are either retiring (7) or were defeated in the primary (2)
- This removes 147 years of combined experience on the committee and leaves only 44
- Of the 14 chairs of House committees, five are not seeking re-election and one is running for a state Senate seat. And there will be 6 new chairs of Senate committees
- A total of 5 (4 D’s and R’s) sitting Senators lost their primary races and will not be returning

## **ADMINISTRATION**

Governor Youngkin continues to be engaged with the higher education community. He meets regularly with public university leaders. And he has indicated in several forums that his priorities for higher education are focused on cost containment and internships. He has expressed additional interest in maintaining affordability, addressing student mental health, and ensuring free speech on campuses. While we will not see his budget priorities until later this fall, it is assumed that these priorities will be reflected in his budget released in December 2023.

As is typical, there have been a few staff changes in the administration, including some new faces in the Secretary of Education’s Office. Secretary Guidera continues to lead the team. However, there are new staff in the higher education area:

- **Nicholas Kent will be the new Deputy Secretary for Higher Education.** Currently he is the Chief Policy Officer at Career Education Colleges and Universities – He starts Sept. 15.
- **Zach Jacobs will be the new Assistant Secretary for Higher Education.** Currently he is at the Farm Bureau. He starts Monday, September 4th.

Finally, Peter Blake, the long-time director of SCHEV has announced his retirement. He has indicated that he will step down at the end of 2023. A search committee has begun the work to find his replacement.



## **VIRGINIA BUSINESS HIGHER EDUCATION COUNCIL (VBHEC) UPDATE**

The Virginia Business Higher Education Council (VBHEC), is a coalition of higher education business leaders whose mission is to enhance the performance of Virginia's public colleges, universities, and community colleges and their funding by state government so they can produce the greatest possible positive impact on Virginia's economy. They do this by educating the public and policy makers about higher education's crucial role in Virginia's economy and help to secure the support needed for the Commonwealth's colleges, universities, and community colleges to rank among the nation's best.

As it does every major election cycle, the VBHEC undertook a poll on Virginians' views about its higher education system. Unlike recent national polls that indicate a lack of support for the nation's institutions of higher education, Virginians largely support the work of our institutions, and their commitment to producing workers that contribute to the health of our economy. These poll results are currently being shared with candidates and leadership of both parties.

Additionally, VBHEC recently commissioned a report on the Economic Impact of Virginia's public higher education institutions. While the specific statewide results will be released later this fall as the VBHEC rolls out its latest campaign, the news is good. Our institutions contribute significantly not just to the education of our Commonwealth, but to the economy as well.

More information about the VBHEC's efforts will be unveiled at an event October 26<sup>th</sup> in Richmond put on in partnership with the Virginia Chamber.

### **KEY DATES**

#### **General Assembly:**

- Nov. 14 - House Appropriations Committee Annual Retreat - Richmond
- Nov. 16-17 - Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee Annual Retreat - Tysons
- Dec. 20 – Governor presents his budget (to HAC and SF&AC) – 9:30am - Richmond
- Jan 10 - Session begins - noon
- Jan 12 – Budget amendments due (*tentative*)
- Jan 19 – Bill filing deadline
- Feb 14 – Crossover
- Feb 18 – Money committees report out their budgets
- March 9 – Session ends - Sine Die (*scheduled*)

#### **Other Dates:**

- VA Free Leadership Lunch – Sept. 29 (Tysons)
- Chamber / VBHEC event – Oct. 26 (Richmond Convention Center)
- Governor's Higher Ed free speech gathering – Nov 29 - UVA



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** External Relations Committee

**FROM:** COL Kim Parker

**SUBJECT:** Six Year Plan Presentation

**DATE:** 22 August 2023

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As required by statute, VMI presented its six-year plan to the Op Six working group on 10 August. Op Six membership consists of the following offices: Secretary of Finance, Secretary of Education, Director of the Department of Planning and Budget, Director of the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee, Staff Director of the House Appropriations Committee, and Director of SCHEV.

The presentation was approximately 30 minutes, three deep dive questions were discussed for 45 minutes, and other questions from members discussed for 30 minutes. Mr. Fain represented the Board of Visitors and provided the Op Six with some context to start the meeting. MG Wins began the presentation with a strategic overview, and details of the plan were outlined by BG Moreschi, BG Clark and COL Rakes.

Written comments from the Op Six are anticipated by 15 September and responses to any questions and the final plan are due on 1 October. The Board of Visitors will formally review the plan for adoption at the September meeting.

The presentation is attached for your information. Comments to begin the discussion on the deep dive questions follow the presentation.





# **VMI SIX-YEAR PLAN**

**Major General Cedric T. Wins '85**  
**VMI Superintendent**

**Thursday, 10 August 2023**  
**James Monroe Building**

**Presentation to the Op-Six**



# INTRODUCTIONS

- **Mr. Hugh M. Fain III:** Vice President, VMI Board of Visitors
- **Major General Cedric T. Wins:** VMI Superintendent
- **Brigadier General Robert W. Moreschi:** Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of Faculty
- **Brigadier General Dallas B. Clark:** Deputy Superintendent for Finance and Support
- **Colonel E. Lee Rakes:** Director of Institutional Effectiveness
- **COL Kimberly C. Parker:** Director of Government Relations
- **CAPT Michael J. Sebastino:** Associate Dean for Academic Administration and Planning
- **LTC Shannon M. Eskam:** Director of Financial Aid
- **LTC Joe R. Hagy:** Director of Admissions
- **Mr. Jeffrey L. Lawhorne:** Director of Finance and Budget
- **Mr. David G. Sigler:** Financial Analyst

# Briefing Agenda

- MG Wins Strategic Overview
- COL Rakes Trends and Outcomes
- BG Moreschi Academic Strategies
- BG Clark Financial Plan
- Deep Dive Discussion



# Mission, Vision, Values

**MISSION:** Produce educated, honorable men and women prepared for the varied work of civil life, imbued with love of learning, confident in the functions and attitudes of leadership, possessing a high sense of public service, advocates of the American Democracy and free enterprise system, ready as citizen-soldiers to defend their country in time of national peril.

**VISION:** Our vision is to be the premier small college in the nation, unequaled in producing educated and honorable citizen-leaders with an international reputation for academic excellence, supported by a unique commitment to character development, self-discipline, and physical challenge, conducted in a military environment.

**VALUES:** Our core values include Honor, Excellence, Self-discipline, Courage, Esprit de Corps, Selfless Service, Resilience.







# Guiding Tenets of the Strategic Vision

- To be the first-choice destination for talented students, faculty, and staff.
- Develop and implement a leadership and education model that other institutions of higher learning seek to emulate.
- Teach America's next generation of leaders to think critically and ethically, and work effectively in teams.
- Mentor and graduate men and women to serve the nation and the Commonwealth with courage and honor.



# Strategic Plan Initiatives (Pending BOV approval - September 2023)

- Prepare Exceptional Leaders
- Enhance Academic Excellence
- Recruit Top Cadets and Boost Success
- Foster Esprit de Corps
- Provide Exceptional Facilities



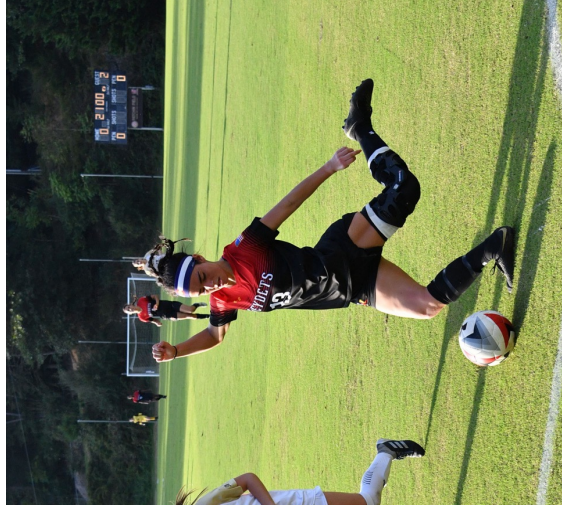
# The Corps of Cadets remains Strong

- The result of the VMI experience is a premier product - an educated and honorable leader of character prepared for the future
- The **Honor Code**, **Rat Line**, and **Class and Regimental systems** unite the Corps
  - ✓ Full daily schedules demanding time management skills
  - ✓ The Brother Rat spirit
  - ✓ Top-tier academic rigor
  - ✓ Inspections, demerits, penalty tours, parades
  - ✓ Correct wear of uniforms for various functions
  - ✓ ROTC classes, labs, and field training exercises
  - ✓ Forming-up as a Corps and marching to meals
  - ✓ Individual physical training, club sports, NCAA athletics





# General Order #1: Operating Rules of the Institute



SUNDAY		MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
0600-1900	RQ 0600-0700	Optional NCJA Practices 0600-0715	Optional NCJA Practices 0600-0715	Optional NCJA Practices 0600-0715	Optional NCJA Practices 0600-0715	Optional NCJA Practices 0600-0715	Optional NCJA Practices 0600-0715	Optional NCJA Practices 0600-0715	Optional NCJA Practices 0600-0715	Optional NCJA Practices 0600-0715	Optional NCJA Practices 0600-0715	Optional NCJA Practices 0600-0715	Optional NCJA Practices 0600-0715
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Final Cadet Daily Schedule  
Revised 2022

A cadet's daily schedule is dictated by General Order #1. Each day begins at 0600 and ends at 2230. Times exist for academics, military training, ROTC training, and athletics.

# Why a VMI Degree?

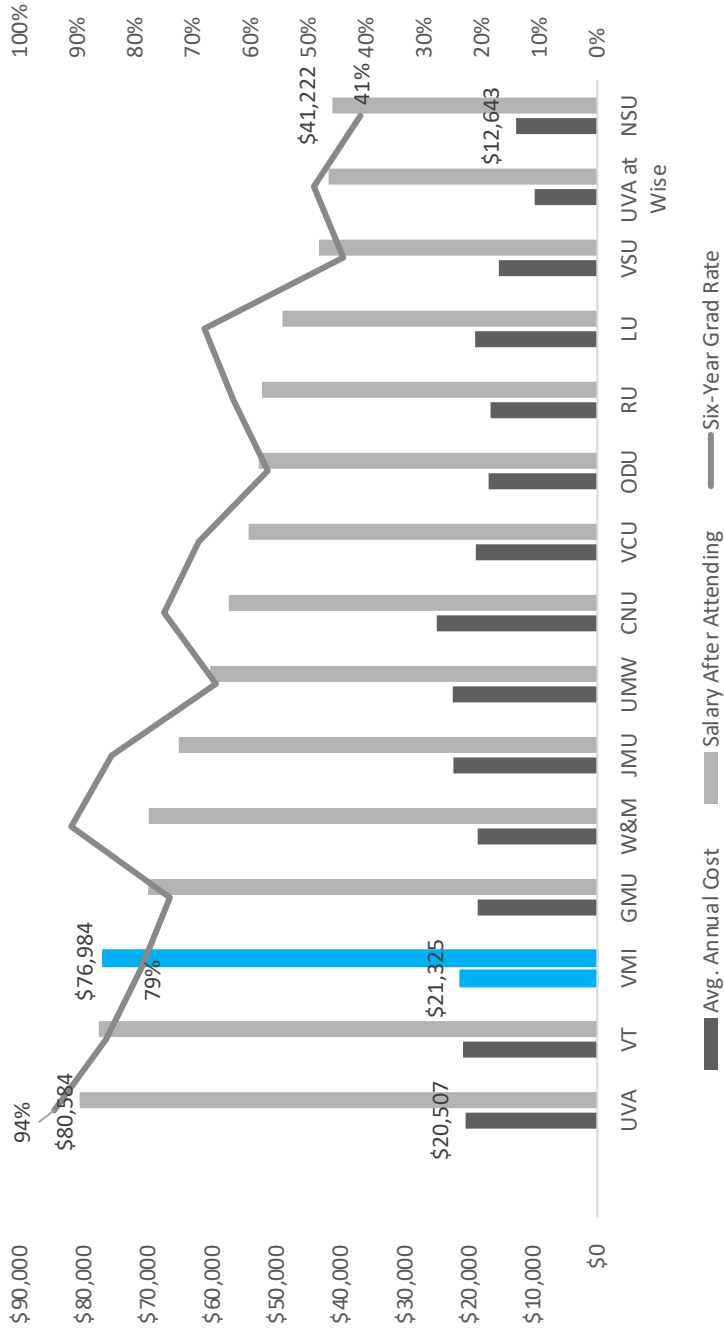
## Selected Rankings:

- **Money magazine Best Colleges (June 2023)**  
Best Colleges in America – 4.5 stars out of 5
- **U.S. News & World Report (September 2022)**  
National Liberal Arts colleges – No. 70 (out of 210 public and private schools)  
Top Public Liberal Arts Colleges - No. 4 (out of 18 public schools listed)  
Engineering Programs (no doctorate) – No. 21 (out of 230 ABET-accredited undergraduate programs)
- **Washington Monthly (September 2022)**  
Best Bang for the Buck, Southeast – No. 49 of 288
- **Wall Street Journal/Times Higher Education Ranking (September 2022)**  
National colleges and universities – No. 158 out of 801 public and private institutions (Top 20 percent)
- **Virginia Educated: A Post-College Outcomes Study of Virginia Public College and University Graduates from 2007 to 2018 (Prepared for SCHEV, October 2021)**  
**Key VMI Findings:**  
Undergraduate education worth the cost: #1  
Undergraduate experience prepared them for the workplace: #1  
Graduates satisfied with life: #2



# Why a VMI Degree?

USDoE College Scorecard 2023



Source: [USDoE 2023 College Scorecard](#) (10 years after attending, received federal financial aid.)  
 Cost is calculated as the average over FTF cadets who receive aid, in-state only.  
 VMI is 3<sup>rd</sup> salary after attending, 5<sup>th</sup> in graduation rates.  
 Graduation rates are based on the 2013 cohort.



# May 2023 Graduation and Commissioning

## GRADUATION 16 MAY 2023:

- 311 Cadets (51 Females, 260 Males)
- Distinguished Graduates with Institute Honors – 20 Cadets
- Distinguished Graduates – 46 Cadets
- Graduate with Distinction – 112 Cadets
- Total Honors Graduates – 178 (57%)

## COMMISSIONING 15 May 2023:

- 166 Cadets (53% of Class)
  - US Army
  - US Navy
  - US Marines
  - US Air Force
  - US Space Force
  - US Coast Guard

- ✓ Historically, 97% of non-commissioning graduates are employed or enrolled in graduate school within six months.





# CLASS OF 2027: CURRENT PROFILE

as of 31 July 2023

## ANTICIPATED MATRICULANTS

TOTAL NUMBER: 505 (429 MEN, 76 WOMEN)

IN-STATE: 284 (56.2%)

OUT OF STATE: 221 (43.8%)

AVERAGE GPA: 3.58

NCAA ATHLETES: 179

TRANSFER STUDENTS: 22

ATTENDED AN OPEN HOUSE: 214





## SCHEV Initiative for the Recruitment and Retention of Pell-Eligible Students

Project: A Holistic Approach to Expanding College and Degree Access to Pell-Eligible Virginians  
Adjusted Project Cost: \$3,832,025

<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2</u>	<u>Year 3</u>	<u>Year 4</u>	<u>4 Year Total</u>
\$920,841	\$944,812	\$969,968	\$996,404	\$3,832,025

- Establish a Strategic Enrollment Management office to implement a data-driven process to engage, enroll, and retain at-risk student populations including Pell-eligible students
- Provide Summer Transition Program (STP) scholarships
- Enhance marketing materials and create online cadet orientation and campus tours
- Targeted name purchase
- Waive Admissions application fees



## Unique Model/Exceptional Results

- Four-year leadership and academic development experience
- Followership developing into leadership
- Develop leaders who exhibit competence, courage, caring, and integrity
- Lead self, influence others, lead within an organization, and command
- Leadership opportunities throughout a cadetship

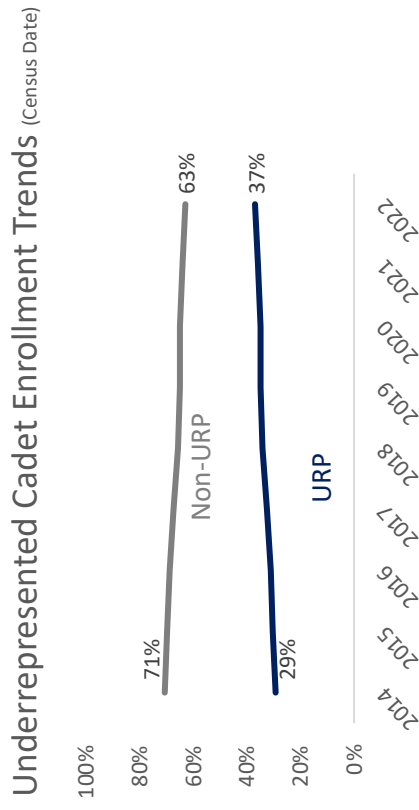
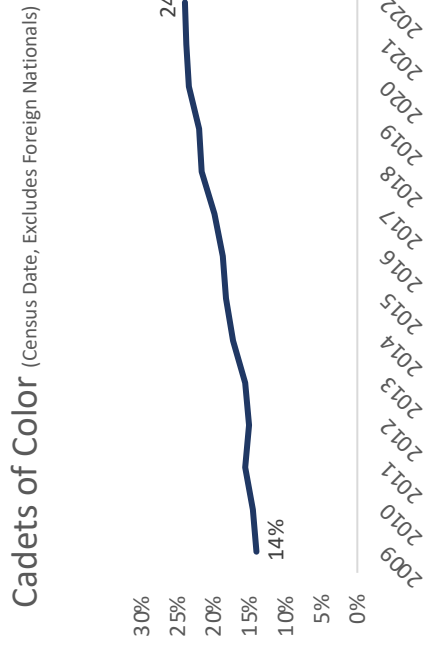
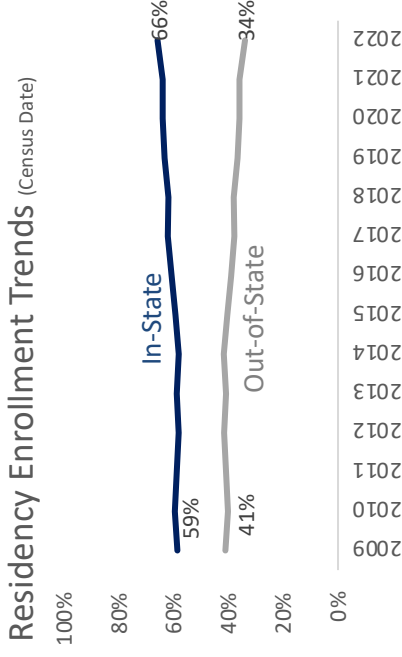
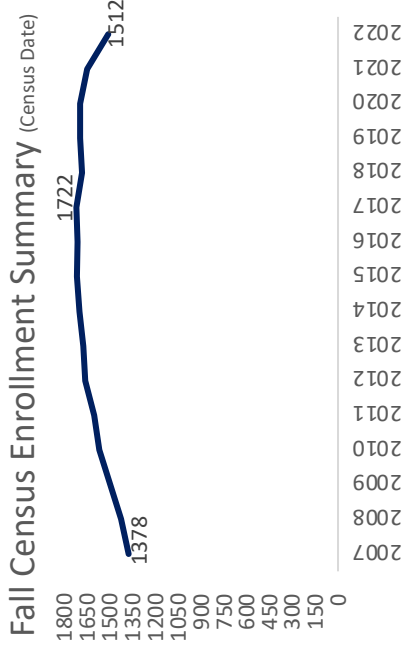


# **Trends and Outcomes**

**Colonel Lee Rakes**

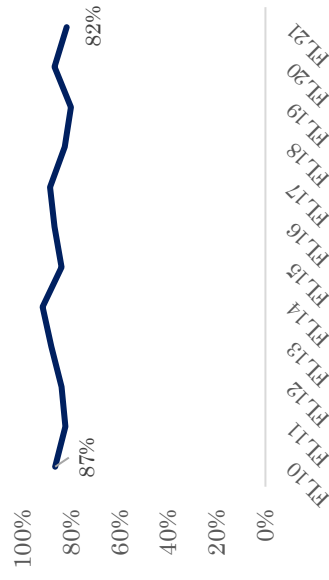
**Director of Institutional Effectiveness**

# Selected Enrollment Trends

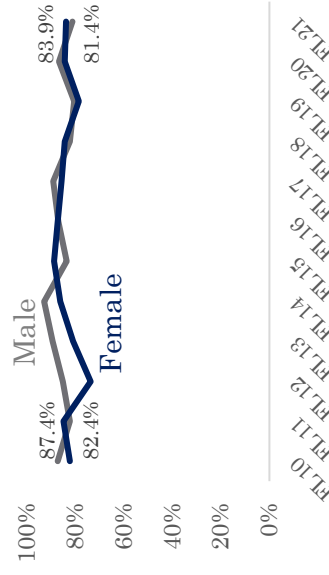


# Retention Rates

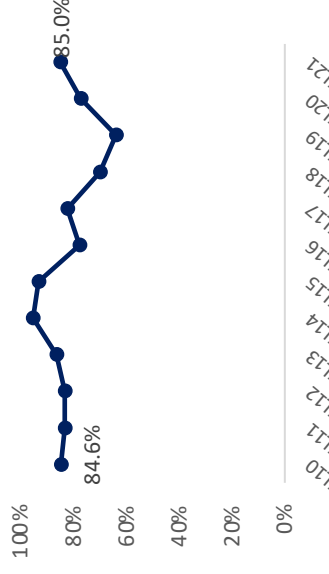
Overall Retention Rates (Freshmen to Sophomore)



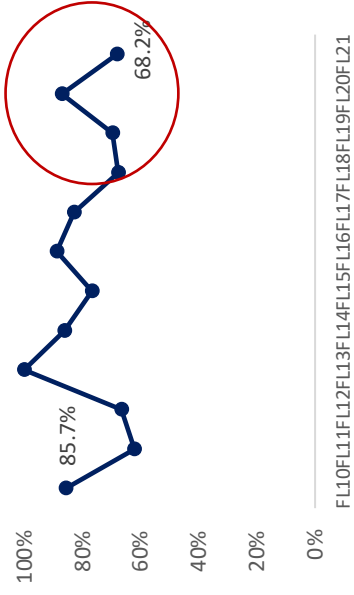
Male/Female



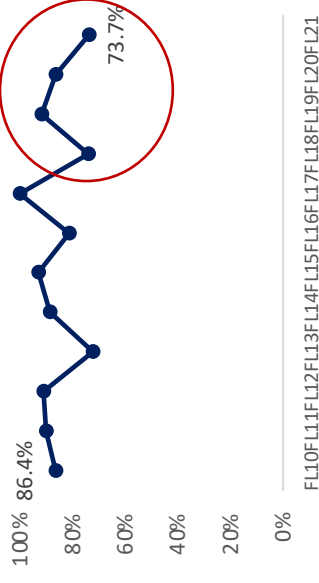
Hispanic/Latino



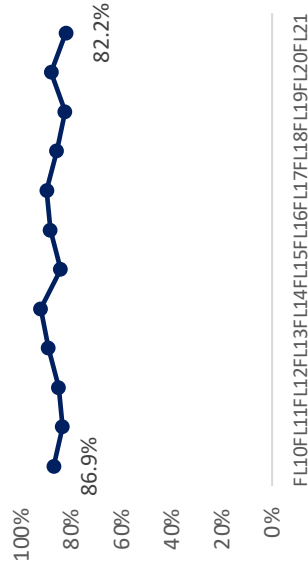
Black/African American



Asian



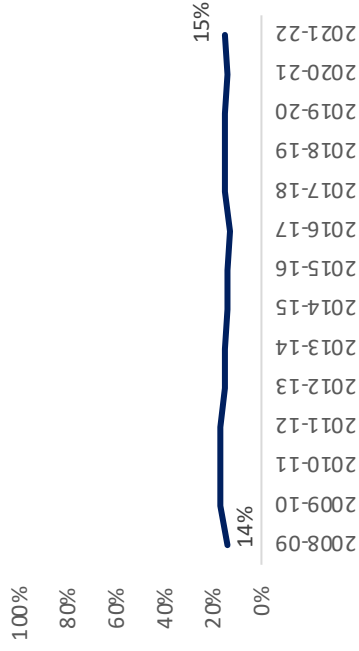
White



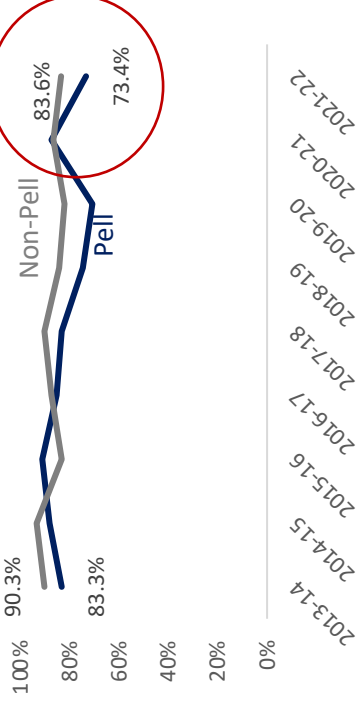
Notes: First-time, full-time cadets. Retention rates reflect freshmen who return their sophomore year.

# Pell Recipients & Outcomes

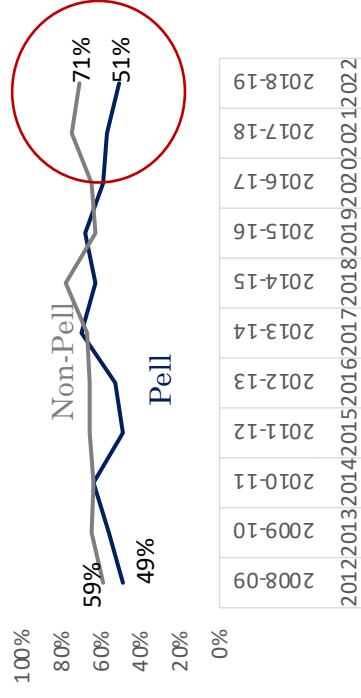
Pell Recipients



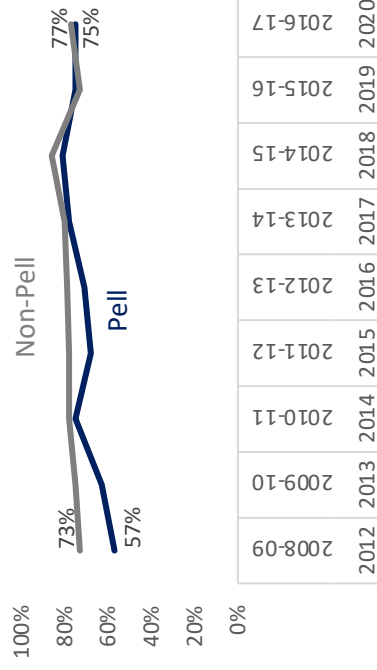
Pell Retention Rates



Pell Four-Year Grad Rates



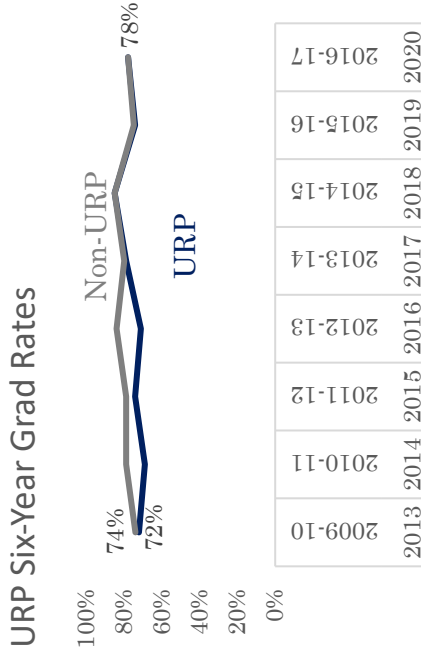
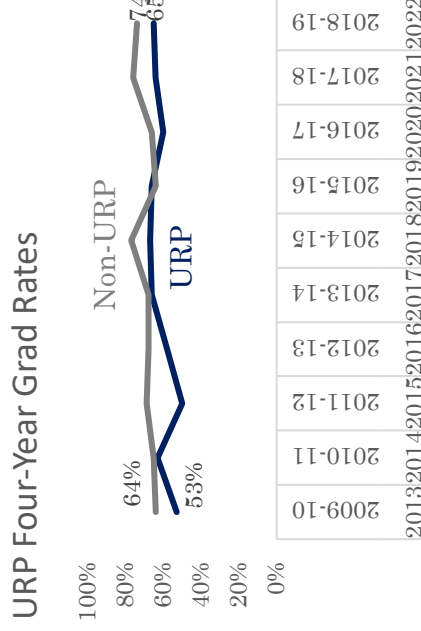
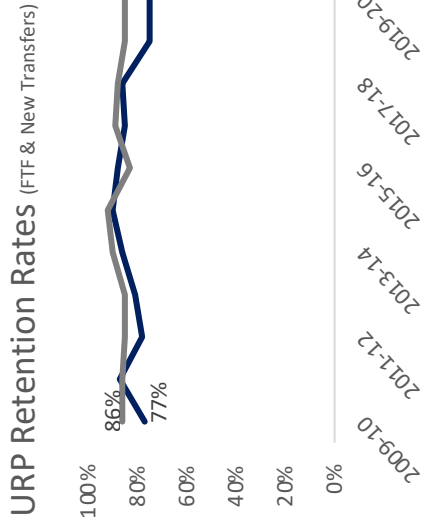
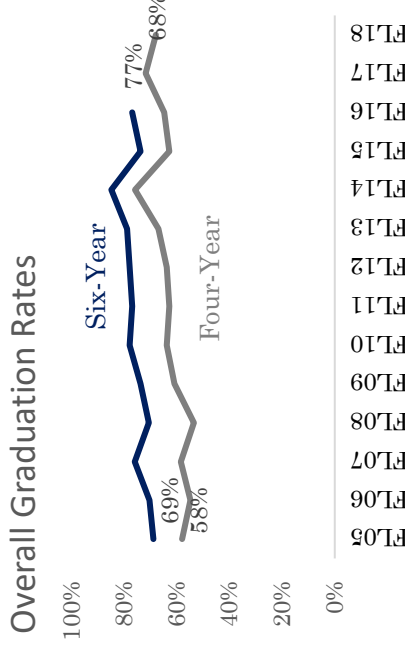
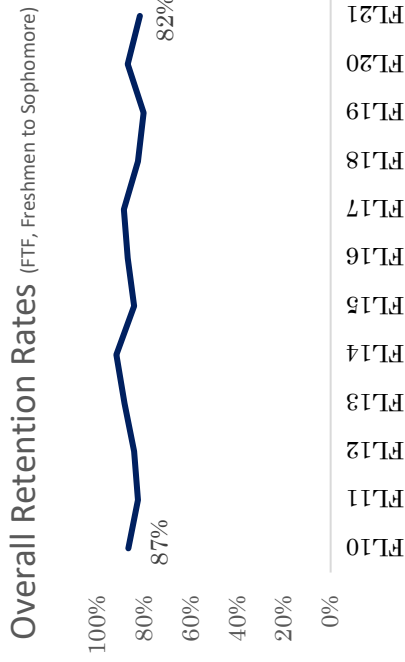
Pell Six-Year Grad Rates



Notes: Pell recipients are the percentages of total Pell recipients among all cadets at Census Date. Retention rates and grad rates charts are first-time, full-time cadets. Retention rates reflect freshmen who return their sophomore year. Grad rates: vertical dates are cohort entry year; horizontal dates are graduation year.



# Selected Outcome Metrics

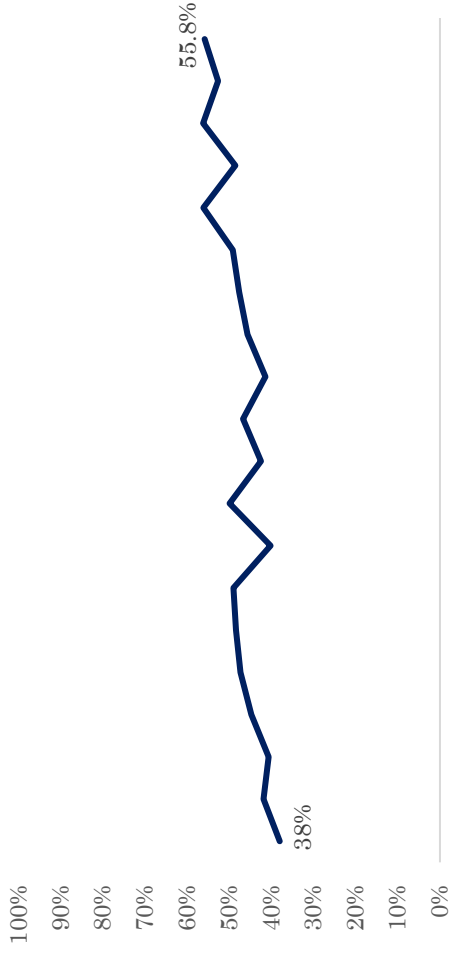


Notes: First-time, full-time cadets. Retention rates reflect freshmen who return their sophomore year. Grad rates: vertical dates are cohort entry year, horizontal dates are graduation year.



# Commissioning Rates

% Graduates Commissioning



	'09	'10	'11	'12	'13	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	'22
Foreign	3	3	2	6	4	2	5	3	4	4	5	5	4	3
Coast Guard					1	0	2	0						
Navy/Marine Corps	43	41	47	42	49	52	49	48	45	57	35	49	46	48
Air Force	28	14	21	10	11	13	13	10	14	37	24	24	35	32
Army	68	63	97	67	99	85	101	117	119	133	103	125	117	104
# Commissioning	142	121	167	125	163	153	168	180	182	231	167	203	202	187
# Graduates	289	301	335	294	349	369	368	377	370	412	344	361	384	335
% Graduates Commissioning	49.1%	40.2%	49.9%	42.5%	46.7%	41.5%	45.7%	47.7%	49.2%	56.1%	48.5%	56.2%	52.6%	55.8%





# **Academic Strategies**

**Brigadier General Robert W. Moreschi**  
**Deputy Superintendent for Academics and**  
**Dean of the Faculty**

# Academic Strategies/Actions

- **Expand and enhance academic support services from the Miller Academic Center, the Mathematics Education and Resource Center, and the Writing Center, to include:**
  - Identifying at-risk cadets and risk analysis
  - Using analytic software to predict cadet success and fashion the type and frequency of intervention
  - Review and enhancement of academic advising for best practices
  - Enhanced new student academic orientation prior to the start of the fall semester
  - Review of academic standards while maintaining rigor
- **Enhance academic excellence and outcomes for all cadets**
  - Additional partnerships with public and private employers to provide more internship and experiential learning opportunities
  - Provide professional development in best practices in use of educational technology and the science of human learning and academic motivation.
  - Support additional opportunities for cadets to participate in study abroad and service-learning projects
  - Use the privately funded Director of Innovation Programming position to enhance research and learning opportunities
  - Review current major field of study offerings for relevance and cogency
  - Enrich faculty onboarding and training programs to facilitate cadet development

# **Six-Year Financial Plan**

**Brigadier General Dallas B. Clark**

**Deputy Superintendent for**

**Finance and Support**



## Six-Year Financial Plan

- Assumes no increase in state general funds
- Assumes a 3% increase in employer health insurance rates
- Assumes enrollment at census date FY 2025 of 1,520
- Projects in-state tuition increase of 3% in AY24-25 and AY25-26
- Includes unavoidable cost increases (utilities, insurances, etc.)
- Proposes a 2% faculty and staff salary increase in FY 2025 and 2% in FY 2026
- Includes \$100,000 additional student financial aid from tuition revenue in FY 2025 and an additional \$100,000 in FY 2026



# Tuition and Fees (In-State)

	<u>FY 2024</u>	<u>Inc</u>	<u>FY 2025</u>	<u>Inc</u>	<u>FY 2026</u>
In-State Tuition	\$10,076	3%	\$10,378	3%	\$10,690
Mandatory Non-E&G Fees	<u>\$10,408</u>	2.7%	<u>\$10,688</u>	2.3%	<u>\$10,934</u>
Total In-State Tuition and Mandatory Fees	\$20,484	2.8%	\$21,066	2.6%	\$21,624

Note: Excludes Room and Board



# Tuition and Fees (Out-of-State)

	<u>FY 2024</u>	<u>Inc</u>	<u>FY 2025</u>	<u>Inc</u>	<u>FY 2026</u>
Out-of-State Tuition	\$40,778	3%	\$42,000	3%	\$43,260
Mandatory Non-E&G Fees	<u>\$10,408</u>	2.7%	<u>\$10,688</u>	2.3%	<u>\$10,934</u>
Total Out-of-State Tuition and Mandatory Fees	\$51,186	2.9%	\$52,688	2.9%	\$54,194

Note: Excludes Room and Board



# Financial Aid

<u>Source of Aid</u>	<u>FY 2024</u>	<u>FY 2025</u>	<u>FY 2026</u>
Out-of-State Tuition	\$ 2,300,000	\$ 2,400,000	\$ 2,500,000
State Funds	\$ 1,418,318	\$ 1,418,318	\$ 1,418,318
Federal Funds (Pell, SEOG)	\$ 1,490,000	\$ 1,537,700	\$ 1,580,800
ROTC Scholarships	\$14,000,000	\$14,350,500	\$14,708,750
Private Funds <i>(Call to Duty Scholarships)</i>	<u>\$13,050,000</u>	<u>\$13,351,250</u>	<u>\$13,660,031</u>
TOTAL	\$32,258,318	\$33,057,768	\$33,867,899
VMSDEP Waiver Growth	<u>FY2018</u>	<u>FY2021</u>	<u>FY2023</u>
	\$ 103,453	\$725,465	\$1,095,223



# General Fund Requests

<u>Strategies</u>	<u>FY 2025</u>	<u>FY 2026</u> (Cumulative)
Associate Dean for Academic Support	\$169,000	\$341,380
Employer Relations/Internship Coordinator	\$63,000	\$127,260
Core Course in “American Constitutional History”	\$ 0	\$ 90,000
Global Education Initiative	\$63,000	\$127,260
Summer Undergraduate Entrepreneurship Program	\$ 0	\$61,000



# Capital Outlay Priorities

Priority	Project Name	Project Budget	Projected Submission for FY2024	
			Phase/FY	Phase/FY
1	Improve 307 & 309 Letcher (Admissions and Financial Aid)	\$7,355,713	Detailed Planning FY2025	Construction FY2026
2	Improvements to New Market Battlefield State Historical Park	\$30,444,618	Detailed Planning FY2025	Construction FY2026
3	Improvements to Hinty Hall and Infrastructure	\$22,429,128	Detailed Planning FY2025	Construction FY2026
4	Barracks Windows (Construction Phase)	\$36,703,158	Construction FY2026	
5	Construct Moody Hall (Construction Phase)	\$68,631,674	Construction FY2026	
6	Construct CLE Phase II (Construction Phase)	\$89,853,804	Construction FY2026	
7	Cocke Hall Annex	\$7,768,639	Detailed Planning FY2025	
8	Crozet Hall Renovation	\$46,851,724 (NGF)	Detailed Planning FY2025	
9	Patchin Field Soccer & Lacrosse Stadium/Palette Hall Renovation	21,706,757 (NGF)	Detailed Planning FY2025	


# Closing Remarks





# Deep Dive Discussion Information

## Deep Dive Enrollment and Recruitment

- Latest 2023 Matriculation Numbers: 505 (  35.8% over 2022)
- Design of New Enrollment Management Model
  - Synchronizing the functional areas of marketing, admissions, and financial aid to help coordinate overall recruitment. New model will provide direction and coordination of Post-wide services and departments that have an impact on key cadet milestones impacting recruitment and retention.
  - Efforts have been successful thus far. Work will continue to integrate other areas of enrollment management pertaining to cadet success.

# Deep Dive Enrollment and Recruitment

- **Out-of-State Strategy**
  - Use of historical enrollment data and predictive modeling to drive recruitment schedule and lead generation
  - Incorporate attendance at high-traffic recruiting events with captive audiences (EX: JROTC Leadership and Academic Bowl)
  - Collaborate with VMI Alumni Agencies and out-of-state alumni chapters at recruiting events to add quality volume
  - Accessibility:
    - Join Common Application
    - Virtual Open House/Engagement Events
    - Virtual Post Tour
  - Change in Recruiting Focus: Renewed focus on geographic location and affinity to attend VMI
    - Military high schools, JROTC, proximity to military installations, military families
  - Utilize student search features such as "Interest in My Peers" with sophomore, junior, and senior search
    - Engage students who are interested in other senior military colleges but do not know about VMI
- **Best Practices From Other Senior Military Colleges**
  - Call to Duty Scholarship (room/board scholarship): Recruit and matriculate national ROTC scholarship winners
  - Develop guaranteed admission agreements for military high schools (currently 8 and growing) in VA, PA, NC, SC, TX



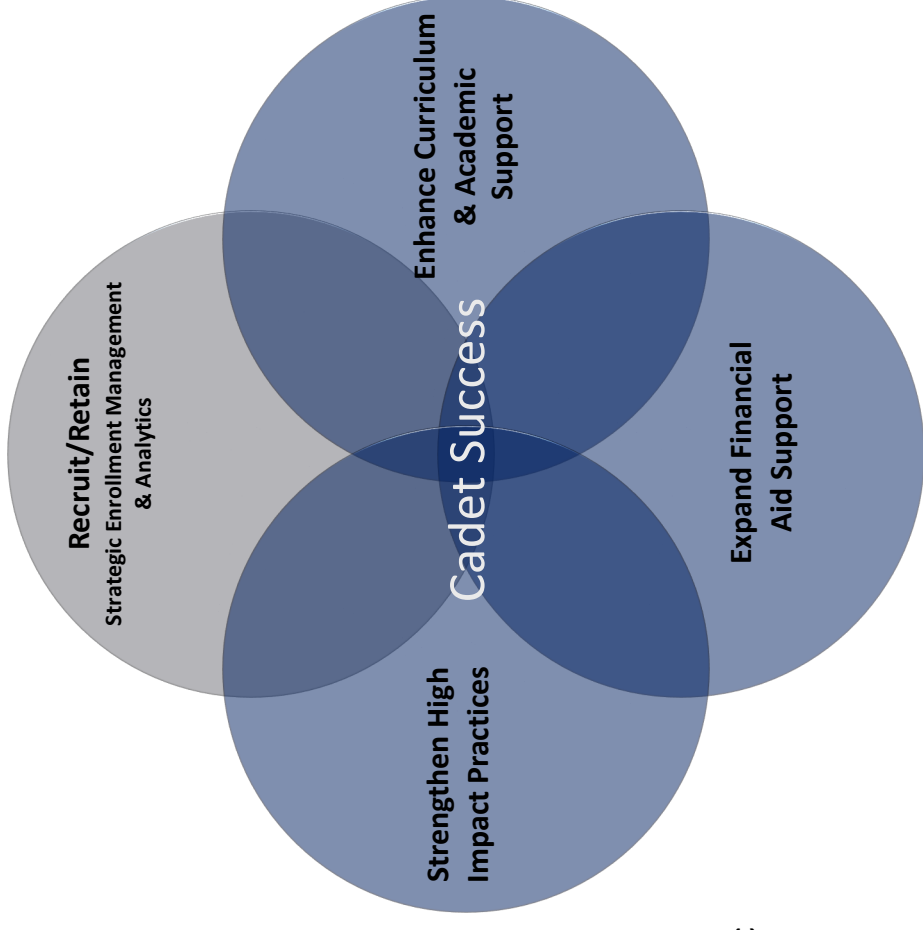
# Deep Dive Student Outcomes

## Drivers behind differences in retention rates (Asian and Black/African American retention rates)

- #1 cited reason for cadets who attrit: *VMI is not for me.*
  - We are currently modifying the exit interview process in such a way to generate more meaningful insights.

## Strategies to improve student outcomes for disadvantaged populations

- Pell initiative grant awarded by SCHEV
- Enhancing the core curriculum (e.g., professional development for faculty focused on academic motivation and human learning)
- Strengthening high-impact practices (e.g., study abroad, **internships**, undergraduate research)
- Integrating new enrollment management technology that enhances learning, academic advising, and support with predictive and diagnostic analytics
- Expanding financial aid support



## Deep Dive Revenue & Expenditures

- A combination of ongoing strategies have been implemented to manage expenditures due to rising operating costs, thus allowing VMI to limit tuition increases (0% in FY2023 and 3% in FY2024) :
  - Intentional management of vacancy savings (not a hiring freeze)
  - Reduced overtime expenditures
  - Approval of mission critical travel
  - Service contract reviews resulting in adjustments (IT, printers/copiers)
  - Level-funding for departmental operating budgets

## **Fall 2023 Schedule of Visits Superintendent/BG Clark/COL Parker**

### **Post Visits**

2 September	Senator Creigh Deeds, Chairman, Senate Finance Capital Outlay
19 October	Secretary of Finance Stephen Cummings, Deputy Secretary John Markowitz
23 October	Delegate Ellen Campbell
TBD	Delegate Terry Austin, Vice Chairman of House Appropriations
TBD	Delegate Chris Head – running for Senate in SD 3

### **Off Site Visits**

18 October (TBD)	Delegate Jennifer Carroll Foy – running for Senate in SD 33
TBD	Delegate Nick Freitas
TBD	Delegate Sam Rasoul
TBD	Senator David Suetterlein

### **Richmond Visits**

10 August	Op Six Briefing
28 August	GPAC/Council of Presidents
September TBD	Governor’s Chief of Staff, Secretary of Education, Counsel
30 October	GPAC/Council of Presidents
20 December	Governor’s Presentation of Biennial Budget



# **VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE OPERATIONAL REQUESTS**

## **Associate Dean for Academic Support**

**\$169,000**

The Institute plans to adopt a strategic management approach that would bring the offices of Admissions and Financial Aid under one umbrella and foster collaboration on the recruitment and retention of cadets. The Math Education Resource Center, Miller Academic Center, Writing Center, and use of predictive analytics are part of this strategic effort.

## **Employer Relations/Internship Coordinator**

**\$63,000**

VMI requests recurring State general funds of \$63,000 beginning in FY 2025 to fund a new employer relations/internship coordinator position. This position will allow VMI to meet the growing demand for internships, enhance cadet support, strengthen industry connections, streamline administrative processes, and enable program expansion to enhance its ability to provide every cadet an opportunity for a meaningful internship experience.

## **Global Education Support Staff**

**\$63,000**

This position will serve as the lead for international support for F-1 and J-1 visa students and scholars with responsibilities as a Designated School Official and Alternate Responsible Officer. The position will advise international students on the maintenance of immigration status, maintain immigration records in compliance with federal law and regulations, plan and execute international student orientations, cultural programming, and a variety of presentations related to immigration and international student concerns.

## **Summer Undergraduate Entrepreneurship Program**

**FY 26 \$61,000**

The Summer Undergraduate Entrepreneurship Program (SUEP) would consist of a five-week summer course adopted from the Experiential Entrepreneurship Curriculum. Completion of the proposed program will make cadets more competitive for internships as well as future employment. The requested funding would support approximately 12 cadets' academic credit, room and board as well as the program costs (instructor salaries, instructional materials, invited speakers, and travel). Private funding jump started this program for FY24 and FY25.

## **Core Course in American Constitutional History**

**FY 26 \$112,000**

Continued delivery, assessment, and improvement of a Core Curriculum course that provides all cadets with a solid understanding of US History, the Constitution, and Civics. Additional faculty may be required.

# **VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE CAPITAL REQUESTS**

## **Construct Moody Hall**

**\$68.6 Million**

Removes three existing facilities to construct a new purpose-built facility to support academic lectures and symposia, academic events (e.g, Distinguished Speaker Series), alumni offices and support spaces. Growth in the Corps of Cadets has resulted in larger sized events and demand for modernized facilities designed around current programming.

## **Center for Leadership and Ethics Phase II**

**GF \$66.4 Million NGF \$23.4 Million**

Construction of a 66,144 square foot facility will include classrooms, auditorium, group collaboration areas, museum displays, interactive learning and general support spaces. Project includes the construction of a 425-car parking structure. The project will result in shared resources between the Museum System and the Center for Leadership and Ethics.

## 2024 General Assembly Session Key Dates

20 November	Prefiling of Legislation Begins	
20 December	Governor Presents Biennial Budgets	GA Building
10 January	Session Convenes	Capitol
12 January	Budget Amendments Due	Money Committees
14 February	Crossover	
TBD February	Cadet Legislative Visit/Legislative Reception	Library of Virginia
9 March	Session Adjourns Sine Die	Capitol
20 March	Reconvened Session	Capitol

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** External Relations Committee

**FROM:** COL Kim Parker

**SUBJECT:** Grant for the Recruitment and Retention of Pell-eligible Students

**DATE:** 25 August 2023

---

Under the leadership of BG Clark, a work group assembled from across Post to develop and submit a grant proposal to recruit and retain Pell-eligible students from the Commonwealth. An appropriation of \$25 million was authorized for this initiative in the 2022 Acts of Assembly and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) was tasked with administering a competitive grant process for the funds.

As a result of the work group's efforts, VMI was awarded \$3.8 million over four years to fund a holistic approach to recruiting and retaining these students. The Memorandum of Understanding is attached along with the budget for each year of the award.



## Memorandum of Understanding

**An agreement between the Commonwealth of Virginia  
and each public institution of higher education receiving funding under  
Item 142 M of the 2022 Act of Assembly, Chapter 2, also referred to as the Pell  
Initiative  
EFFECTIVE FY2023-24 THROUGH FY2026-27**

### Authorization

2022 Act of Assembly, Chapter 2, [Item 142 M](#)

1. Out of this appropriation \$250,000 the first year and \$25,000,000 the second year from the general fund is provided to enhance efforts to recruit and retain students eligible for Pell grant assistance at public institutions of higher education.
2. The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia shall work with institutions with below average enrollment of Pell-eligible students to develop individualized recruitment and retention plans targeting low-income students. The Council shall partner with a nationally recognized consultant with experience in this area. The Council shall present a preliminary plan to the Governor, the Chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees no later than October 1, 2022. The Council shall present a final report on the final products for each institution to the same group no later than June 1, 2023.
3. Any Virginia public institution of higher education may apply for pilot funding in the second year through a competitive grant process. Applications must demonstrate efforts to restructure outreach, recruitment, admission and retention procedures. Funds may be used to support initiatives to attract, enroll, and retain low-income students. Institutions may also request funding for additional need-based financial aid. Priority shall be given to institutions with below-average Pell enrollment and to institutions with below-average endowments.
4. Any institutional grant under this initiative shall be subject to performance outcomes established in paragraph 5.
5. The Council shall establish eligibility criteria, evaluate proposals, determine award sizes, establish performance outcomes and monitor performance in consultation with staff from the House Appropriations and the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees, the Office of the Secretary of Education, and the Department of Planning and Budget. The Council shall notify the Chairs of the House Appropriations Committee and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee 30 days prior to releasing funds to institutions.

## Pell Initiative - MOU

### **Commonwealth obligation**

The initiative(s) covered by this MOU neither create(s) nor imply(ies) any obligation upon the Commonwealth. No guarantee or expectation exists that state funding for the initiative(s) will be automatically renewed by the Commonwealth once this program has concluded. Nonetheless, the institution should consider a plan for the sustainability of successful initiatives funded by this program. The institution may address post-program sustainability by identifying outside sources of funding, finding efficiencies within the institution, increased revenue from enrollment growth or requesting additional funds through the annual budgetary process. However, all staff hired using these funds and all staff administering activities funded by this program must be informed that the position and/or activities are grant-funded and that the long-term viability is dependent upon securing other sources of funding.

### **Use of funds**

Total expenditures of state funds for the institution's initiative(s) cannot exceed the approved four-year total, unless explicitly authorized by SCHEV. The institution may supplement approved activities with other fund sources.

If the results of approved activities are found to be unsatisfactory, funds associated with that activity may be diverted to another activity identified within the approved initiative. The institution must inform SCHEV when unexpended funding from one year or for one activity is redirected to another year or another activity identified in the funded initiative.

In no case may funding be diverted to an activity not identified within the funding proposal without explicit authorization from SCHEV. In no case, may funding identified for a future year be moved to a more recent year, without explicit SCHEV approval.

Funding will be released annually over four years based on the expected expenditures provided to SCHEV. See Funding Schedule below.

### **Annual review**

The institution will be evaluated annually regarding the progress and success of the funded activities. Longitudinal data will serve as a baseline for evaluation that will consider the estimated impact of how the FAFSA Simplification Act and the federal movement from Expected Family Contribution (EFC) to Student Aid Index (SAI) may result in more students becoming Pell eligible as well as other extraneous national, state, and local events impacting enrollment of low-income students. The institution's annual enrollment and retention rates will be reviewed for progress, with particular attention on the metric – enrollment or retention rates – in which the institution falls below the state average.

## VMI Budget Worksheet

### Salaries and Wages

Personnel	Qty	Monthly Salary	Months of effort	Total Salary
Assistant Superintendent for Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM)	1	\$ 11,475.67	12	\$ 137,708.04
Administrative Assistant (SEM)	1	\$ 3,500.00	12	\$ 42,000.00
Academic Support Coordinators	2	\$ 4,167.00	12	\$ 100,008.00
College Access Coach	1	\$ 4,167.00	12	\$ 50,004.00
				\$ -
<b>Total Salaries and Wages</b>				<b>\$ 329,720.04</b>

### Fringe Benefits

Full Benefit Package (Full Time Employees)	\$ 149,687.00
<b>Total Fringe Benefits</b>	<b>\$ 149,687.00</b>

### Travel

Open House & STP Travel Vouchers	\$ 37,500.00
<b>Total Travel</b>	<b>\$ 37,500.00</b>

### Other Direct Costs

	Quantity	Cost per item	Total Cost
STP Scholarships	25	\$ 3,448.00	\$ 86,200.00
CRM Software	1	<del>\$ 53,000.00</del>	\$ -
Common App Subscription	1	<del>\$ 15,000.00</del>	\$ -
Marketing Materials	1	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 79,484.00
Targeted Name Purchase (College Board)	1	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
Online Cadet Orientation and Campus Tour	1	\$ 66,250.00	\$ 66,250.00
Emergency Financial Assistance	1	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
Application Fees	1800	\$ 40.00	\$ 72,000.00
			\$ -
			\$ -
			\$ -
<b>Total Other Direct Costs</b>			<b>\$ 403,934.00</b>

**TOTAL DIRECT COSTS** \$ **920,841.04**

**TOTAL INDIRECT COSTS** \$ -

**BUDGET TOTAL** \$ **920,841.04**



## VMI Budget Worksheet

### Salaries and Wages

Personnel	Qty	Monthly Salary	Months of effort	Total Salary
Assistant Superintendent for Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM)	1	\$ 12,049.45	12	\$ 144,593.40
Administrative Assistant (SEM)	1	\$ 3,675.00	12	\$ 44,100.00
Academic Support Coordinators	2	\$ 4,375.35	12	\$ 105,008.40
College Access Coach	1	\$ 4,375.35	12	\$ 52,504.20
	0			\$ -
<b>Total Salaries and Wages</b>				<b>\$ 346,206.00</b>

### Fringe Benefits

Full Benefit Package (Full Time Employees)	\$ 157,171.35
<b>Total Fringe Benefits</b>	<b>\$ 157,171.35</b>

### Travel

Open House & STP Travel Vouchers	\$ 37,500.00
<b>Total Travel</b>	<b>\$ 37,500.00</b>

### Other Direct Costs

	Quantity	Cost per item	Total Cost
STP Scholarships	25	\$ 3,448.00	\$ 86,200.00
CRM Software	1	<del>\$ 53,000.00</del>	\$ -
Common App Subscription	1	<del>\$ 15,000.00</del>	\$ -
Marketing Materials	1	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 79,484.00
Targeted Name Purchase (College Board)	1	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
Online Cadet Orientation and Campus Tour	1	\$ 66,250.00	\$ 66,250.00
Emergency Financial Assistance	1	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
Application Fees	1800	\$ 40.00	\$ 72,000.00
	0		\$ -
	0		\$ -
	0		\$ -
<b>Total Other Direct Costs</b>			<b>\$ 403,934.00</b>

**TOTAL DIRECT COSTS** **\$ 944,811.35**

**TOTAL INDIRECT COSTS** **\$ -**

**BUDGET TOTAL** **\$ 944,811.35**



## VMI Budget Worksheet

### Salaries and Wages

Personnel	Qty	Monthly Salary	Months of effort	Total Salary
Assistant Superintendent for Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM)	1	\$ 12,651.93	12	\$ 151,823.16
Administrative Assistant (SEM)	1	\$ 3,858.75	12	\$ 46,305.00
Academic Support Coordinators	2	\$ 4,593.75	12	\$ 110,250.00
College Access Coach	1	\$ 4,593.75	12	\$ 55,125.00
	0			\$ -
<b>Total Salaries and Wages</b>				<b>\$ 363,503.16</b>

### Fringe Benefits

Full Benefit Package (Full Time Employees)	<b>\$ 165,029.92</b>
<b>Total Fringe Benefits</b>	<b>\$ 165,029.92</b>

### Travel

Open House & STP Travel Vouchers	\$ 37,500.00
<b>Total Travel</b>	<b>\$ 37,500.00</b>

### Other Direct Costs

	Quantity	Cost per item	Total Cost
STP Scholarships	25	\$ 3,448.00	\$ 86,200.00
CRM Software	1	<del>\$ 53,000.00</del>	<del> </del>
Common App Subscription	1	<del>\$ 15,000.00</del>	<del> </del>
Marketing Materials	1	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 79,484.00
Targeted Name Purchase (College Board)	1	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
Online Cadet Orientation and Campus Tour	1	\$ 66,250.00	\$ 66,250.00
Emergency Financial Assistance	1	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
Application Fees	1800	\$ 40.00	\$ 72,000.00
	0		\$ -
	0		\$ -
	0		\$ -
<b>Total Other Direct Costs</b>			<b>\$ 403,934.00</b>

**TOTAL DIRECT COSTS** **\$ 969,967.08**

**TOTAL INDIRECT COSTS** **\$ -**

**BUDGET TOTAL** **\$ 969,967.08**



## VMI Budget Worksheet

### Salaries and Wages

Personnel	Qty	Monthly Salary	Months of effort	Total Salary
Assistant Superintendent for Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM)	1	\$ 13,284.52	12	\$ 159,414.24
Administrative Assistant (SEM)	1	\$ 4,051.69	12	\$ 48,620.28
Academic Support Coordinators	2	\$ 4,823.70	12	\$ 115,768.80
College Access Coach	1	\$ 4,823.70	12	\$ 57,884.40
0				\$ -
<b>Total Salaries and Wages</b>				<b>\$ 381,687.72</b>

### Fringe Benefits

Full Benefit Package (Full Time Employees)	\$ 173,281.41
<b>Total Fringe Benefits</b>	<b>\$ 173,281.41</b>

### Travel

Open House & STP Travel Vouchers	\$ 37,500.00
<b>Total Travel</b>	<b>\$ 37,500.00</b>

### Other Direct Costs

	Quantity	Cost per item	Total Cost
STP Scholarships	25	\$ 3,448.00	\$ 86,200.00
CRM Software	1	<del>\$ 53,000.00</del>	\$ -
Common App Subscription	1	<del>\$ 15,000.00</del>	\$ -
Marketing Materials	1	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 79,484.00
Targeted Name Purchase (College Board)	1	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
Online Cadet Orientation and Campus Tour	1	\$ 66,250.00	\$ 66,250.00
Emergency Financial Assistance	1	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
Application Fees	1800	\$ 40.00	\$ 72,000.00
0			\$ -
0			\$ -
0			\$ -
<b>Total Other Direct Costs</b>			<b>\$ 403,934.00</b>

**TOTAL DIRECT COSTS** **\$ 996,403.13**

**TOTAL INDIRECT COSTS** **\$ -**

**BUDGET TOTAL** **\$ 996,403.13**



## VMI Budget Summary

Senior Personnel	Salaries and Wages				
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Assistant Superintendent for Strategic Enrollment	\$ 137,708.04	\$ 144,593.40	\$ 151,823.16	\$ 159,414.24	\$ 593,538.84
Administrative Assistant (SEM)	\$ 42,000.00	\$ 44,100.00	\$ 46,305.00	\$ 48,620.28	\$ 181,025.28
Academic Support Coordinators	\$ 100,008.00	\$ 105,008.40	\$ 110,250.00	\$ 115,768.80	\$ 431,035.20
College Access Coach	\$ 50,004.00	\$ 52,504.20	\$ 55,125.00	\$ 57,884.40	\$ 215,517.60
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Total Salaries and Wages</b>	<b>\$ 329,720.04</b>	<b>\$ 346,206.00</b>	<b>\$ 363,503.16</b>	<b>\$ 381,687.72</b>	<b>\$ 1,421,116.92</b>
Fringe Benefits	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Full Benefit Package (Full Time Employees)	\$ 149,687.00	\$ 157,171.35	\$ 165,029.92	\$ 173,281.41	\$ 645,169.68
<b>Total Fringe Benefits</b>	<b>\$ 149,687.00</b>	<b>\$ 157,171.35</b>	<b>\$ 165,029.92</b>	<b>\$ 173,281.41</b>	<b>\$ 645,169.68</b>
Travel	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
Open House Travel Voucher	\$ 37,500.00	\$ 37,500.00	\$ 37,500.00	\$ 37,500.00	\$ 150,000.00
STP Travel Voucher	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other Travel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Total Travel</b>	<b>\$ 37,500.00</b>	<b>\$ 37,500.00</b>	<b>\$ 37,500.00</b>	<b>\$ 37,500.00</b>	<b>\$ 150,000.00</b>
Other Direct Costs	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
STP Scholarships	\$ 86,200.00	\$ 86,200.00	\$ 86,200.00	\$ 86,200.00	\$ 344,800.00
CRM Software	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Common App Subscription	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Marketing Materials	\$ 79,484.00	\$ 79,484.00	\$ 79,484.00	\$ 79,484.00	\$ 317,936.00
Targeted Name Purchase (College Board)	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 200,000.00
Online Cadet Orientation and Campus Tour	\$ 66,250.00	\$ 66,250.00	\$ 66,250.00	\$ 66,250.00	\$ 265,000.00
Emergency Financial Assistance	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 200,000.00
Application Fees	\$ 72,000.00	\$ 72,000.00	\$ 72,000.00	\$ 72,000.00	\$ 288,000.00
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Total Other Direct Costs</b>	<b>\$ 403,934.00</b>	<b>\$ 403,934.00</b>	<b>\$ 403,934.00</b>	<b>\$ 403,934.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,615,736.00</b>
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
	\$ 920,841.04	\$ 944,811.35	\$ 969,967.08	\$ 996,403.13	\$ 3,832,022.60
TOTAL INDIRECT COSTS	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
BUDGET TOTAL	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
	\$ 920,841.04	\$ 944,811.35	\$ 969,967.08	\$ 996,403.13	\$ 3,832,022.60



# VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE

LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA 24450-0304

Finance & Support Office  
Phone 540-464-7697  
Fax 540-464-7169

29 August 2023

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Visitors – External Relations Committee

FROM: Brigadier General (BG) Dallas Clark

SUBJECT: Local Government Relations Update

VMI continues a robust relationship throughout the Lexington/Rockbridge County community to include involvement in organizational boards and committees, supporting events, and maintaining effective communications on programs that impact the local jurisdictions. Below is a summary of VMI's local government relations activity from May through August 2023:

**17 May 2023** – Meeting with Rockbridge County Schools Superintendent Phillip Thompson and Operations Director Randy Walters. Colonel (COL) Jeffrey Boobar, Senior Director of Finance & Support; Mr. Keith Jarvis, Director of Facilities Management; and Mr. Gus Singleton, Institute Planning Officer, attended for VMI. At the meeting, Mr. Thompson discussed a request from the school district of the need for VMI to give up 50 feet of right of way along Hines Lane in order to give the Rockbridge County High School land to install a generator and transformer for an updated vocational school project. Currently, VMI has a 100 foot right of way along Hines Lane which leads to VMI's Hinty Hall. As a result of the meeting, VMI agreed to look into the request with the appropriate Commonwealth agencies in Richmond. As of the date of this memorandum, coordination with the Virginia Department of Transportation and the Attorney General's Office continues.

**18 May 2023** – Meeting with Rockbridge County Commonwealth Attorney Jared Moon. BG Clark introduced COL Boobar as the new Senior Director of Finance & Support. BG Clark briefed Mr. Moon about COL Boobar's responsibilities as local government liaison.

**23 May 2023** – Question & Answer Briefing by city planners to the Rockbridge County/Lexington Chamber of Commerce. COL Boobar, Mr. Gus Singleton and Mr. David Sigler, VMI Financial Analyst, attended for VMI. Briefings were provided by Mr. Chris Stapleton, Rockbridge County Planner; Mr. Arne Glaeser, Lexington City Director of Planning & Development; and Mr. Tom Roberts, Buena Vista City Planner. Subjects covered included: a possible Carilion Hospital expansion in Lexington; a future "Rockbridge Creative Institute" (residential trade school) on property in Buena Vista; a discussion of multi-unit dwellings within county and city limits; and a discussion of Comprehensive Zoning Plans for each community.

**24 May 2023** – Meeting with Lexington City Manager Jim Halasz. BG Clark introduced COL Boobar as the new Senior Director of Finance & Support. BG Clark briefed Mr. Halasz about COL Boobar's responsibilities as local government liaison. Issues discussed included: the



ongoing city project to have a “master meter” for water delivery to both VMI and W&L; the potential purchase of the old garage next to the Aquatic Center by VMI; VMI tailgating issues at the middle school during home football games; cooperation for the beautification of the Chessie Nature Trail; and a possible fall 2023 visit to VMI by Mr. Halasz and the Lexington City Council.

**31 May 2023** – Meeting with Rockbridge County Administrator Spencer Suter. BG Clark introduced COL Boobar as the new Senior Director of Finance & Support. BG Clark briefed Mr. Suter about COL Boobar’s responsibilities as local government liaison. Issues discussed included: an overview of the Rockbridge County Board; an overview of the Rockbridge County administrative offices; the county search for a new Operational Medical Director to oversee county wide EMT programs and subsequent VMI funding assistance; and ongoing coordination between VMI and the Rockbridge County School District on the Hines Lane right-away issue.

**29 June 2023** – BG Clark and COL Boobar attended the Lexington Fire Department’s dedication for their new ladder truck (Tower 9). This new ladder truck cost \$1.7 million and was funded in part by VMI. VMI has committed \$350,000.00 over ten years (\$35,000.00 per year) to the City of Lexington in order for the city to replace emergency vehicles. The VMI funding began in FY 2023. Tower 9 will greatly enhance the Lexington Fire Department’s ability to respond to fire emergencies on the VMI Post and throughout Rockbridge County (See photo below).





**4 July 2023** – VMI was a sponsor in the City of Buena Vista Independence Day Celebration and Fireworks Show which took place in Glen Maury Park. Funds raised above the cost of the event will be re-invested into the Buena Vista community by the local Rotary Club chapter.

**2 August 2023** – VMI hosted the Lexington Police Department Summer Camp for Children in the Corps Physical Training Facility (CPTF). The camp goers participated in numerous physical and leadership activities to include utilizing the CPTF climbing wall.

**18 August 2023** – The VMI Athletic Department hosted a Movie Night at Foster Stadium for families of incoming cadets and the local community. The movie “The Little Giants” was shown on the large stadium scoreboard. There was no charge for admission, and approximately 100 people attended the event. Parkhurst Dining also provided concessions support.

**19 August 2023** – MG Wins hosted Lexington City Manager Jim Halasz and Lexington City Police Chief Angela Greene at the Matriculation March Up Ceremony in Cameron Hall. Earlier in the day, 491 new cadets matriculated into VMI. New cadet training began immediately after the march up into Barracks. It was the first time Mr. Halasz and Chief Greene had participated in the Matriculation event at VMI.

**29 August 2023** – COL Boobar attended the ribbon cutting for the “Gateway Triangle Garden” located at the entrance to downtown Lexington on Route 11. This beautification project’s goal is to bring more businesses and tourists into Lexington. The garden was coordinated by the Main Street Lexington business group. The project was funded by donations from local businesses and others. In FY 2022, VMI donated \$10,000.00 to the project. Other donors included the City of Lexington, Washington & Lee University (W&L), and members of the local Chamber of Commerce. Representatives from VMI, W&L, the City of Lexington, the Chamber of Commerce, and Main Street Lexington attended the ribbon cutting (See photo below).



VMI's participation in local organizations is also ongoing. These organizations include membership in the Rockbridge County/Lexington Chamber of Commerce; membership in Main Street Lexington, a small business group; board membership on Project Horizon, a local domestic and sexual violence prevention organization; and chair of the Chessie Nature Trail Advisory Group. Through its certified EMT program, the Corps of Cadets continues to provide EMS support to local emergency services including the Lexington Fire Department and other Rockbridge County agencies. In addition, COL Boobar, in his role as local government liaison officer, continues to monitor and participate in both Lexington City Council and Rockbridge Board of Supervisors meetings and activities as appropriate.



# VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

TO: VMI Board of Visitors External Relations Committee

FROM: Col. Bill Wyatt  
Director of Communications & Marketing

DATE: Sept. 12, 2023

RE: Communications & Marketing Update

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This update covers the communications and marketing activities for academic year 2022-23 as well as projects currently in progress.

## I. MEDIA COVERAGE

Between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023, 20,484 news items mentioned or featured information about VMI. This is an increase of 23.7% over the previous year.

34% of the news items are categorized as positive. Positive sentiment, increased from 27% in 21-22 to 34% in 22-23. Negative sentiment (11%) also increased from 2% during the same period in 2022.

Potential reach of news coverage from 1 April to 31 August exceeded 78.89 billion possible readers, an increase of 4.9% over the previous year.

## II. ROYALTIES

VMI earns royalties from the sale of licensed products. These items include clothing and swag with the VMI logo. Collegiate Licensing Company (CLC) manages the licensing of VMI and many other NCAA schools' products.

YEAR	TOTAL ROYALTIES	REVENUE TO VMI
2019-2020	\$68,125	\$54,746.97
2020-2021	\$52,540	\$42,031.63
2021-2022	\$101,077	\$80,861.27
2022-2023	\$100,278	\$80,222.63

## III. NEWS & EDITORIAL SERVICES

The News & Editorial Services team, in partnership with nearly every department on post, has provided coverage of events, successes, milestones, and personnel recognition. In the last year, the team has averaged more than 12 stories per month for the VMI website, social media, local

news coverage pitches, and for publications. Each major was featured in at least one story, and some academic departments were featured in more than 10 stories. There was also a steady flow of write-ups highlighting construction projects, cadet research or conference participation, human-interest stories, and the advancement of programs for cadets. This coverage is amplified by the remarkable photography that is viewed and shared. Tens of thousands of photos were taken in the last year by a full- and part-time photographer, including event footage, but also headshots, portraits, and general post photos.

Relationships continue to blossom with news media in the area. Several outlets have begun to come to us throughout the year for added commentary on high-profile stories around the world, as they consider VMI faculty and staff an expert in numerous areas. The media relations specialist also has been able to share news stories with our neighbor Washington and Lee for them to share on their platforms, and she continues to work with WFXR (Fox affiliate) on placing a weather camera on the roof of Moody Hall – agreements are in the works that would provide a feed accessible to Nexstar Media Group stations across the country.

The Institute Report will be celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. Institute Reports in this academic year will each feature a look back on news stories over the years.

The team kept the Institute and department budget top of mind as items were created. Things were created to use digitally, printing costs were lowered through a cut in the number of Institute Reports that were printed, and the VMI calendar was put on hold for this year (Aug. 2023-Aug. 2024).

Some special highlights in the last year include:

- A cadet who was part of an avalanche rescue effort in the Austrian Alps, covered by news outlets across the country, including NBC affiliates in Connecticut, Boston, and Washington, D.C.
- The final construction progress and opening of the Aquatic Center. The ribbon cutting was a big success, and the NES team was also there when the NCAA water polo and swimming and diving teams took the first plunge into the pool.
- The opening of the new cadet activity center, The Arsenal, allowing the team creativity to develop a logo for the center, signage to advertise for the activities and food, and fun staged photography.
- VMI's first direct commissions into the U.S. Coast Guard was shared by Coast Guard partners and was very popular on social media.
- Several significant retirements, including Col. Wes Robinson, Capt. Ned Riester, Dr. Copeland, Col. Bob Phillips. Also, some exciting new faces at VMI including Lt. Col. Hagy, Lt. Col. Eskam, Dr. Krawiec and Capt. Eli Facemire.
- A new human-interest story featuring the unique hobbies and talents of VMI faculty and staff.

With an 85% pitch success rate, stories of VMI events, cadet accomplishments, special guests,

and club successes were shared in news outlets across the country, including many hometown papers of our cadets.

Other major event support, that featured photography, videography, stories for the website and social media, as well as programs, signage, media attendance, etc. included:

- Rat Unity event that provided school supplies to two local elementary schools
- Breakout
- Ring Figure
- Founders Day
- Graduation and commissioning, including the May 2023 commissioning that, for the first time, had cadets commissioning into all six military services
- Environment Virginia Symposium, Leadership Conference, Cyber competitions, and the Leader in Residence program organized through the Center for Leadership and Ethics
- Honors Week and Summer Undergraduate Research Institute projects highlighting long-term research partnerships with cadets and faculty mentors
- USIBA Boxing Nationals
- Fall and Spring FTX
- Sports Hall of Fame
- VMI Theatre performances
- Faculty awards and accolades, including 10 faculty members on the With Good Reason radio program

Departments from across post have relied on our team for flyers, banners, logos, event programs, and other publications. Larger publications include:

- Academic catalog
- New Cadet Handbook, an insanely useful tool as families plan for Matriculation Day
- VMI Editorial Style Guide, which falls under General Order 42, providing VMI “housestyle” guidelines for VMI terms, buildings, events, etc.
- The Superintendent’s Newsletter
- Institute Reports

At any given time, the team is working on five or more assignments that require graphic design, branding approvals, vendor research, printing arrangements, etc. These include:

- Programs and invitations for Ring Figure events, Breakout events, Founders Day events, VMI Theatre performances, etc.
- Banners for department or recruiting activities
- Flyers for guest speakers or club events open to post and the wide community
- Title IX materials available for all of post and for families on Matriculation Day

#### IV. PUBLICATIONS

During the course of the 2022-23 academic year, the Publications team produced or printed more than 100 publications for departments across post. In many instances, this includes designing, editing, proofing, contracting with a local printer or printing the publications in house.

During the end of the spring semester/summer, the publications team worked on the following projects:

- VMI Graduation Program
- Memorial Ceremony Program
- VMI Viewbook
- VMI Women's brochure
- ROTC Brochure
- Parent Guide
- Advantages sheet (printed and new digital format)
- Rat Bible
- Honor Court sheet
- RDC/GC/OGA/CEA sheets
- New Admissions handout

The Publications team also printed a number of reports, publications, and documents:

- BOV May meeting materials
- Blue Book (in process)
- CLE training books
- Commandant Command books
- Commandant Ground Rules book
- Awards Programs and certificates
- Commissioning Programs
- CLE Year-in-Review newsletter
- Wearing the Uniform books
- Job Fair materials for Human Resources
- Class of 1968 and 2003 Reunion Memorial Programs
- Commandant Rat Survey
- HR benefits brochure
- Cybersmart Workshop program

## V. DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Digital Communications team currently consists of C&M's assistant director of digital communication, social media specialist, digital content specialist, and a videographer (reporting to the director of communications and marketing). The team collaborates with C&M's graphic designers, publishing team, news and editorial, and photographers.

The social media specialist position was filled in December 2022 and a new videographer position was filled at the end November 2022. A new digital content specialist (previously filled as a temporary position) joined the team Jan. 10, 2023. The assistant director of marketing position was reposted and redefined as assistant director of brand marketing following a move by the previous assistant director to the admissions team. As such, reports from this department will be formatted differently moving forward. That job has since been removed from the HR website and remains vacant.

The digital communications team continues to work diligently to improve and streamline communication and messaging processes, branding initiatives, and digital content for departments and offices across post and to VMI's various audiences and stakeholders. The addition of new staff has increased the quantity, speed, reach, and variety of materials created to showcase VMI to stakeholders from high school students and families to alumni to internal VMI audiences and the general public. New initiatives outlined in this report were only possible due to the increased staffing and investment in technologies. Emphasis continues to be placed on projects targeting recruitment, image and brand awareness, user experience, and digital accessibility.

### **Project Highlights for AY2022-23:**

#### Ongoing:

- Update vmi.edu focused on VMI brand and image, search engine optimization (SEO), user experience, and telling the VMI story with focus on recruitment and challenging misconceptions about the Institute.
- Create analytics reports for website and social media use and interaction and meet with offices to review and adjust content based on data.
- Create and manage online forms/surveys for use on web and by C&M through Qualtrics
- Support and promote Admissions events through web design and content, social media promotion, registrations, and analytics.

#### July 2022:

- Determined the need for content (visuals and explanations) on post facilities (many have been updated or recently built) and the promotion of these facilities and the activities that occur within throughout digital and print media and communications. Began mapping out the full scope of the project.
- Finalized branding for new search and nurturing campaigns for admissions and their strategic enrollment partners.
- Created process for team to best collaborate and handle daily social media posts for all main VMI accounts in an efficient manner after the departure of the social media specialist.
- Began truly assessing and tweaking SEO (Search Engine Optimization) for VMI.edu. SEO is the process used to optimize a website's technical configuration, content relevance, and link popularity so its pages can become easily findable when searched for online.
- Finalized online content pertaining to the online admissions process and user-experience on VMI.edu while working with IT on Post View/application portal upgrade for the Aug. 1 application drop date.

#### August 2022:

- The new Post View/application portal went live Aug. 1 at 12:01 a.m. for the start of the new recruiting cycle. OCB ensured that the new processes were communicated to the

public on VMI.edu, VMI social media, and throughout recruiting publications where necessary.

- Determined initial key metrics within Google Analytics for this year's recruiting and application cycle to help identify trends and roadblocks so data-based strategic changes can be made implemented where necessary moving forward.
- Created new brochure for the DEI office and handout for IG/Title IX office regarding their mission and services.
- Assessed, coordinated, and facilitated content updates for all recruiting publications for the new recruiting cycle.
- Facilitated new Moe graphic and new VMI football helmet graphic to be used by Auxiliary Services for Foster Stadium concession stands and possible new apparel options for the VMI Bookstore.
- Coordinated review of all recruiting publications with key internal stakeholders and began making required edits.
- Began determining scope of work to incorporation of the newly approved Coast Guard AUP into all digital media and communications along with recruiting publications and initiatives.
- Continued organized content harvest of cadet quotes, marketing photos, cadet profiles, academic featured stories, event and tradition explanations, etc. for future marketing and recruiting needs and strategic initiatives.

Sept. 2022:

- Collaborate with Alumni Agencies to promote 25th Anniversary of Women at VMI.
- Collaborate with Admissions to launch a new, more detailed Inquiry Form and Questionnaire to gather additional information about interested students as well as parental contact information to support more personalized outreach from Admissions for recruitment.
- Create new style of accessible, printable Academic Catalog, focused on mimicking design overhaul of digital version completed in collaboration with Registrar's office.
- Begin to build sections of U360 mobile app to be used for public-facing info and recruitment as well as main purpose of purchase (Commandant/CLE) for internal Corps communications.
- Facilitate BOV livestream.
- Promote Fall Open House dates.

Oct. 2022:

- Review, approve, and implement website link for Maxient Reporting form (Title IX).
- Meet with BrightEdge for review of search engine optimization (SEO) tool.
- Re-create and update Group Visit form for Admissions and implement related webpage redesign.
- Continue U360 App build, including content design, branding, and layout.
- Continue website upgrades related to SEO and ease of use.

- Collaborate with Admissions, C&M, administration and other stakeholders to provide materials and content for RNL marketing campaign (by previous Assistant Director for Marketing).

Nov. 2022:

- Collaborate with Admissions team for removal of application fee from all web text and downloads.
- Provide redesign of Weekly Bulletin template to address accessibility and branding.
- Promote Founders Day on web and social and facilitate livestream.
- BrightEdge onboarding and development of initial SEO web projects with focus on Apply page and Admissions traffic.
- Onboard new Web Administrator (IT) to TerminalFour CMS.
- Collaborate with Admissions team to design and produce QR code cards for cadet furlough recruiting and other targeted recruitment (ROTC< staff, faculty).
- Continue build of U360 App including test version launch, and meet with Commandant staff and selected cadets for internal communications piece.
- Gather and disseminate Admissions and Financial Aid-specific web analytics and begin monthly meetings with those teams for web and social media plans.
- Collaborate with Admissions, C&M, administration and other stakeholders to provide materials and content for RNL marketing campaign (by previous Assistant Director for Marketing).

Dec. 2022:

- Continued content harvest and streamlining social media content creation process, preparing for arrival of new social media specialist, along with onboarding process.
- Promote graduation events on web and social and facilitate commencement livestream.
- Finalize 90% of U360 App build and submit support tickets to vendor to address errors and issues preventing publishing of app.
- Reach out to social media account owners to update registration with C&M.
- Meet with BrightEdge support to complete first project in SEO optimization of Apply page and to implement Autopilot features for Google-targeted backlink.
- Adjust entire structure of CMS controlling vmi.edu to allow for SEO best practices implementation.
- Collaborate with Financial Aid and Admissions to develop new website, application form, and graphics/social posts for Call to Duty Scholarships.
- Collaborate with Alumni Agencies to include custom link to Inquiry form for ad campaign and associate analytics.
- Collaborate with Admissions, C&M, administration and other stakeholders to provide materials and content for RNL marketing campaign (by previous Assistant Director for Marketing).
- Work with RNL to provide analytics, DNS/URL (with IT), and social media campaign access for upcoming campaign (Web Team).

- Videographer created new hype videos for web and social, new for the OCB team.

Jan. 2023:

- Complete U360 app build and continue to work with Commandant Staff and Straxis (vendor) on needs and technical issues.
- Provide technical support for, promotion of, and data for Virtual Open Houses..
- Complete creation of career resources pages on each academic department subsite in conjunction with Office of Career Services.
- Collaboration with Web Administrator for significant code updates to compensate for outdated CMS structure.
- Provide technical support for RNL marketing campaign with Admissions.
- Create new, accessible digital organization chart for Institute.

Feb. 2023:

- Collaborate with Office of Financial Aid to overhaul website focused on content, SEO, and styling to better serve as part of overall recruitment efforts.
- Promote and support Virtual Open Houses and prepare for and promote in-person, including video and social media.
- Troubleshoot issues with U360 App in preparation for launch.
- Relaunch of Featured Stories section of site, led by Digital Content Specialist.
- Launch of 'The Extra Mile' story series, designed and led by Social Media Specialist.
- Audit of VMI-related social media accounts (ongoing).
- Launch Autopilot SEO features with BrightEdge – in-page linking and image optimization to improve SEO and site performance.
- Design and launch addition to custom mobile tour for Jackson House Museum.

March 2023:

- Launch U360 app & continue to serve as main contact for troubleshooting/modifications.
- Social media and video campaign to connect to Air Force ROTC virtual open house.
- Overhaul content and design of main academics pages to increase SEO.
- Collaborate with VMIAA for promotion of scholarships, gift donations, and events.
- Collaborate with Registrar's Office for continued catalog modernization and accessibility.
- Livestream design/creation/support and promotional social media campaign, including video, for USIBA National Tournament.
- Begin collaboration for cadet-created web content for ERH-411.
- Create Microsoft Office accessibility guide sheet for VMI faculty and staff (in review).

April 2023:

- Continue work on SEO through BrightEdge partnership.
- Redesign iFrame content on vmi.edu with Web Administrator for accessibility and best practices compliance.
- Work with the CLE on Google Analytics set-up for conference websites.



- Collaborate with VMI Alumni Agencies on content planning and sharing, including promotion of #VMissionEndures campaign.
- Participate in DEI to DOI working group for web and social media guidance and complete multiple web updates to facilitate name change.
- Continue to address technical issues with U360 app with vendor.
- BOV livestream support.
- Finalize web edits for May graduation events.

May 2023:

- Work on redesign/custom code for new megamenu to launch Summer 2023 (with Web Administrator) as well as continue CSS cleanup for faster site speed and modern code.
- Provide promotional as well as celebratory web and social content for May graduation events.
- Begin preparation for updates to digital catalog for branding and marketing.
- Coordinate content contributors for summer social media/featured stories campaigns (study abroad, internships, post-grad plans, STP, etc.).

June 2023:

- Continue menu and site template redesign work.
- Begin custom design of Memorial Garden page for VMI Museum.
- Continue collaborations with offices for summer web and social content.
- Featured story series focus on SURI launch.
- Featured story series on cadet summer plans launch.
- Coordinate classroom and STP media gathering and summer program promotion.
- Begin preparations for new Admissions content based on CRM and Common App usage.

**DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS BY THE NUMBERS**

Month	Email Threads in <u>Webedits</u> Inbox*	New Piece of Content Created for vmi.edu	Edits Made to Existing Content on vmi.edu	Featured Stories Written for vmi.edu**	Facebook Posts	Instagram Posts <sup>+</sup>	Twitter Posts	LinkedIn Posts
07/2022	122	64	527 <sup>^</sup>		20	19	17	11
08/2022	188	55	581 <sup>^</sup>		24	165	18	8
09/2022	137	41	275		22	72	17	15
10/2022	97	18	192		27	70	23	17
11/2022	96	20	169		29	58	22	20
12/2022	52	28	859 <sup>^</sup>		25	141	23	18
01/2023	141	38	239		31	38	22	25
02/2023	138	75	711 <sup>^</sup>	4	38	70	33	37
03/2023	175	62	351	8	40	42	76	40
04/2023	136	31	210	7	53	55	36	49
05/2023	129	25	170	4	41	62	44	41
06/2023	111	38	235	3	31	35	32	33
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,522</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>4,359</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>827</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>314</b>
<b>AVG.</b>	<b>126.83</b>	<b>41.25</b>	<b>363.25</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>31.75</b>	<b>68.92</b>	<b>30.25</b>	<b>26.17</b>

\* Change request threads vary from one item updates, such as adding a new staff member, to full section redesigns or large accessibility remediation projects. These numbers do not include requests or project needs sent directly to the Assistant Director for Digital Communication.

\*\* Featured stories from Digital Communications did not begin until the hiring of a new Digital Content Specialist and Social Media Specialist.

<sup>^</sup> Involved major projects documented in this report which required a significant increase in edits to the site, including to page & site templates.

<sup>+</sup> Includes story slides and main feed posts/reels.

## **Digital Communications goals within C&M's previous Strategic Plan:**

### **1.1: INCREASE ENGAGEMENT WITH QUALITY PROSPECTS –**

The digital communications team continues to support the Admissions Office in focusing on recruitment of and engagement with prospective applicants. In particular, the recently hired Social Media Specialist has begun a systemic overhaul of VMI main social accounts to incorporate more video/reels, update styling consistent with competitors while remaining 'on brand' for VMI, Platform content is also now tailored more specifically by audience, with Instagram being heavily tilted towards promoting VMI as a top choice for high school students. The team also designs and supports web-based engagement tools such as the inquiry form and event registration as the Admissions team works to move to their recently acquired customer relationship management (CRM) system. The assistant director designed and implemented the public-facing portion of the U360 app purchased for Corps communications to focus on marketing VMI and encouraging interactions with the Admissions team in conjunction with the Commandant's Office and the Center for Leadership and Ethics.

C&M continues to collaborate with Parents Council leadership on bettering their communication internally with current parents and externally with prospective parents. Specific improvements are focused on the recruiting and communications committees.

### **1.2: COMPREHENSIVE IDENTITY & BRAND GUIDE –**

All members of C&M have worked to fill this gap left by the departure of the Assistant Director of Marketing in December 2022. Efforts are ongoing to ensure all offices and departments are utilizing the most current VMI logos across post. Even though there is a Visual Identity Guide on VMI.edu, it is a concern of C&M that offices and departments do not always follow those branding guidelines. The proposed online comprehensive identity and brand guide will cover everything needed for internal use and external requests. Target completion is fall 2023. The digital communications team continues to build out resources to move forward with an online design toolkit, and is collaborating with the Web Administrator in IT as he overhauls design of internal resources. The web team continues to correct old branding on digital assets on vmi.edu as they are discovered, with a full review and remediation planned for AY23-24.

The current assistant directors in C&M answer all logo requests and licensed vendor product approvals daily while working with VMI departments, offices, and organizations on their specific materials and messaging on a case-by-case basis (e.g., presentations, forms, social media, etc.). They also perform reviews of emails and documents submitted by VMI internal stakeholders for branding compliance. The official online logo request form generated 111 requests during AY2022-23.

### 1.3: EXPANSION AND BETTER LEVERAGING OF DATA –

C&M's digital communications team continues to work with IT, admissions, institutional research, and internally to obtain and utilize proper data for marketing and recruiting strategies and initiatives. This is handled within C&M using analytics from the vmi.edu website, social media platforms, and Qualtrics online forms. Data is shared more widely and more often with various stakeholders, particularly Admissions and Financial Aid.

The web team is working on search engine optimization (SEO) for VMI.edu as well as establishing key performance indicators (KPIs) and SMART goals for those visiting the NoOrdinary.com recruiting landing page and VMI.edu. This includes the purchase of BrightEdge software for professional guidance and support in optimizing VMI.edu, with focus on not only increasing SEO efficiency, but specifically targeting competitor-shared keywords to increase enrollment. Admissions and Financial Aid offices now receive monthly web analytics updates and analytics from social media posts related to their offices and are also provided SEO reports on related keywords.

This tool has been invaluable in streamlining the process of research, project selection, and results-based edits. Through competitor research, the web team has been able to specifically tailor web contents to compete more directly for online traffic with other SMCs and service academies. Thanks to the addition of the new digital content specialist, the team has also been able to add metadata to over 50% of the pages on the public site, a crucial piece of the SEO puzzle.

### 1.4: BOOST SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE & ENGAGEMENT –

Social media is a vital way for Virginia Military Institute to communicate with the VMI community and the world, offering instant access to cadets, alumni, staff, faculty, prospective cadets, and other groups.

- VMI's social media accounts publish pictures, videos, articles, and news briefs highlighting the best of the Institute, bolstering the Institute's reputation and recruitment efforts. Posts on social media accounts include:
- Major events, announcements, and activities on post
- Cadet-focused stories regarding academics, military life, and athletics, with emphasis on the leadership journey
- Cadet events, activities, clubs, and organizations focused on the VMI college experience
- Academic, ROTC, and Athletics achievements, milestones, and vent promotion
- Performance and highlights of staff contributions to VMI and beyond
- Photo and video highlights everyday life at the Institute

VMI social media accounts pay special attention to specific audiences on each platform:

**Facebook:** older alumni, families of cadets, families of prospective cadets

**LinkedIn:** current cadets, a large population of alumni

**Instagram:** current cadets, younger alumni, prospective cadets

**Twitter:** news-oriented accounts, alumni, general public particularly for large events

The hiring of a new Social Media Specialist in December 2022 to fill a sixth-month vacancy has already seen clear payoff in analytics and a more targeted focus on recruitment and direct competition with SMCs and service academies. Every platform is being analyzed and optimized to promote VMI and its cadets in the correct style and format based on audience, algorithms, and industry trends. This is particularly noted in the large increase in video content on Instagram, a key for reaching interested students.

AY2022-23 vs 2021-22 Year-Over-Year Comparison				
<b>FACEBOOK</b>	Fans/Followers	Engagement	Impressions	Brand Awareness
AY21-22	35,164	713,028	17,774,882	12,013
AY22-23	36,512	536,650	12,602,504	6,157
<b>% Change</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>-24.7%</b>	<b>-29.1%</b>	<b>-48.7%</b>
<b>INSTAGRAM</b>	Fans/Followers	Engagement	Impressions	Brand Awareness
AY21-22	20,053	424,525	7,997,149	2,807
AY22-23	22,696	334,439	5,290,561	2,787
<b>% Change</b>	<b>13.2%</b>	<b>-21.2%</b>	<b>-33.8%</b>	<b>-0.7%</b>
<b>LINKEDIN</b>	Fans/Followers	Engagement	Impressions	Total Reached Users
AY21-22	20,706	660,584	2,666,533	1,332,074
AY22-23	22,796	268,807	1,485,827	684,911
<b>% Change</b>	<b>10.1%</b>	<b>-59.3%</b>	<b>-44.3%</b>	<b>-48.6%</b>

- Fans and Followers continue to steadily increase on main VMI social media accounts.
- While drops are still seen in many metrics in this comparison, there is still the issue of negative comments having skewed interactions during AY2021-2022.
- Engagement and impressions decreasing compared to the previous year is not necessarily a fully accurate picture of the success or viability of VMI social media.
  - Early 2022 saw the beginning of less criticism of VMI by news outlets and alumni, with less emphasis on WaPo articles and new leadership and DEI offices, but it was still present. This artificially inflated numbers, particularly on Facebook during that time period.
- Notably, algorithms on all platforms are constantly changing, and the expectation for many accounts is that paid boosts will be used to alleviate this visibility concern. This is a common discussion point in the higher education social media community. The addition of a videographer to create more videos and reels will help increase our visibility as this

is the new expectation of accounts. Posts which utilized video outperformed most other posts across platforms.

- The brand awareness scores consider mentions of the institute and shares of posts. Some decreases were expected as criticism continues to drop the further VMI is from the release of the state investigation.
- Some Twitter stats are now unavailable due to API changes. The digital communications team is researching options for getting this information another way.

A more common measure of social media success and growth can be seen by comparing a time period to the immediate period of same length before. It takes into account algorithms and platform expectations from a more closely related schema, and shows adjustments made each month based on performance analysis of posts and campaigns.

*Note: February often sees a spike as Breakout and Matriculation (Aug.) content performs better than almost all other content, with the possible exception of graduation events.*

April 1 – June 30, 2023 Compared to Dec. 31, 2022 – March 31, 2023				
<b>FACEBOOK</b>	Fans/Followers	Engagement	Impressions	Brand Awareness
	36,512	123,370	2,354,393	1,662
<b>% Change</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>-6.4%</b>	<b>-31.9%</b>	<b>14.5%</b>
<b>INSTAGRAM</b>	Fans/Followers	Engagement	Impressions	Brand Awareness
	22,696	113,067	1,544,419	735
<b>% Change</b>	<b>7.3%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>19.6%</b>	<b>-1.3%</b>
<b>LINKEDIN</b>	Fans/Followers	Engagement	Impressions	Total Reached Users
	22,796	87,145	462,228	185,397
<b>% Change</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>15.1%</b>	<b>-1.2%</b>	<b>-1.2%</b>

### Social Media Content Analysis:

VMI’s social media accounts continue to actively emphasize Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins ’85’s “One Corps, One VMI” outcomes:

### Honor - Diversity and Inclusion - The VMI Brand - Competing and Winning - One VMI

Efforts continue to be made to balance the three-legged stool of VMI in post selection and curation. Additionally, new initiatives look to expand the visual storytelling of what makes a cadet and what defines VMI to be more inclusive and person-centered. This includes continuous competitor and trend research for topics and styles that work well with the VMI ‘brand.’ Each month, the social media specialist also reviews each platform’s posts to review what was

successful, which items may have been less popular, and which new initiatives resonate with audiences.

**Focus on Video:** The addition of a full-time videographer has helped in both measurable and immeasurable ways to boost visibility and interaction on social media. Video-based posts (reels) continue to do very well on all platforms. Most notably, algorithms of Facebook and Instagram specifically prioritize reels, meaning the more video VMI posts, the more likely our page/posts will display in a user’s feed. Prior to these curated, customized videos, it was not uncommon to have less than ten thousand views on a video on Instagram (main target platform), regardless of how long it had been available.

Video	Platform	Reach	Likes & Reactions
Don’t Settle for Ordinary (ROTC focus)	Facebook	5.5K	138
Don’t Settle for Ordinary (ROTC focus)	Instagram	11.4K	1.1K
Are You Ready? #BeatCitadel	Instagram	8.5K	729
Smoke & mirrors: fakeout	Instagram	21.8K	1.5K
Selfless Services: Blake Smith	Instagram	12.1K	937
Happy Lunar New Year	Instagram	8.3K	562
Calling all aspiring leaders (Open House)	Instagram	8.4K	653
Aim High with Air Force ROTC	Instagram	10.9K	884
The Extra Mile: Boxing	Instagram	12.7K	990
STP Promo	Instagram	10.3K	506
Scenes on Post: Cadet Idol	Instagram	10.6K	586
The Extra Mile: Rugby	Instagram	12.5K	801
Scenes on Post: Blood Drive	Instagram	9K	539
Ranger Challenge	Instagram	15.7K	1.1K
Gloves off to the Class of 2023!	Instagram	331.9K	21.7K
Happy #NationalTrailsDay	Instagram	8.4K	576
Happy #NationalTrailsDay	Facebook	5.8K	85

Additionally, an overhaul has begun of the VMI YouTube channel, from branding to organization to content. The videographer has begun to update all marketing-style videos that already existed with new interviews and b-roll. Videos shared on other social platforms are also being added to the channel to better harness YouTube as a recruitment and marketing tool.

#### SUCCESS SNAPSHOT: VMI GOES VIRAL

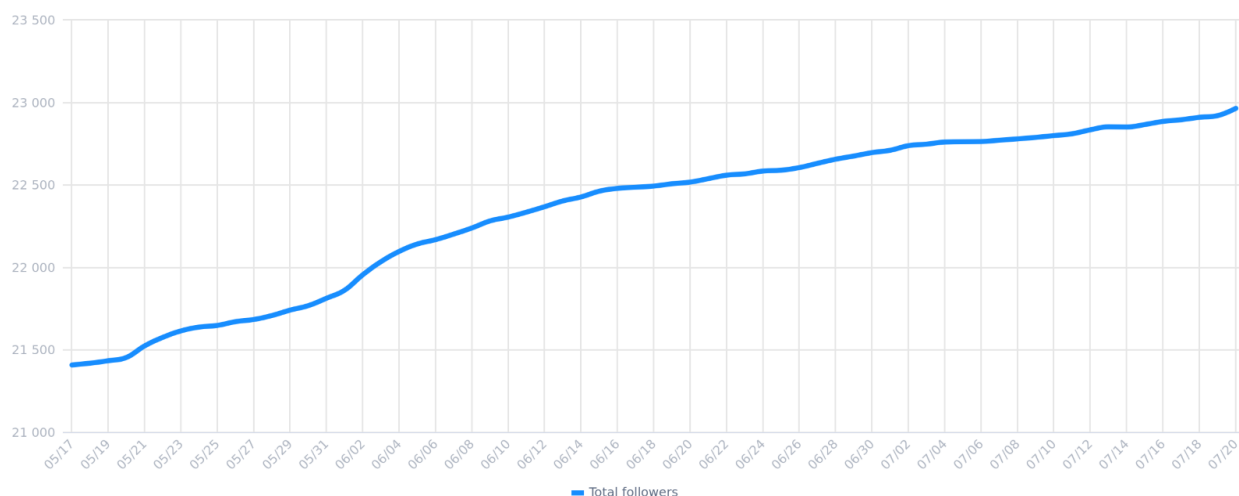
Following the hiring of a Social Media Specialist and Videographer, VMI has been able to target a new facet of social media to reach new records of followers, and potential cadets.

**The Challenge:** To remain current in a constantly changing social media landscape, VMI Communications and Marketing has ventured into the world of videos, and more importantly, “Reels.” These short-form videos appear vertical and are oftentimes the key to a viral video on social media. [A 2023 survey by Morgan Stanley](#) found that 74% of Instagram users are using the platform’s reels feature.

**The Solution:** Commencement and commissioning are annual events that perform very well on VMI’s social media pages. At the conclusion of these events, VMI’s social media specialist and videographer joined together to draft a concept for a reel that would highlight these large-scale events.

**Execution:** Several days before commencement, the pair began to discuss trending audio on Instagram, and shot list ideas. On the day of commencement, the videographer was able to complete the shot list, and film clips that matched the trending audio. The shots included cadets smiling as they walked across the stage in Cameron Hall, dancing after they received their diplomas, and hugging their families at the completion of the ceremony. The reel was posted the day after commencement, May 17, along with a trending sound from [@hotel](#). The video was shared with the caption – “Gloves off to the Class of 2023!”

**Results:** This 17-second video published May 17 boosted VMI’s social media following, reach, and engagement. This reel gained 21,691 likes, 359,013 plays, 123 comments, 1,230 saves, and 1,024 shares. The account received over 1,500 new followers from this post and engaged 321,413 non-followers. Since posting this reel, VMI’s platform following has continued to grow, and our reels have received more than 20,000 views.



Since posting the initial reel on May 17, VMI has seen a significant increase in Instagram following. As of Aug.23, 2023, there are 23,841 Instagram followers, which represents a variation of **+11.6%** compared to Feb. 8, 2023 – May 16, 2023.



**Comparison & Reflection:** In an article by [BusinessofApps](#), they share the impact of reels – “Instagram Reels outperformed all other content types on social apps, generating 55% more interactions than single-image posts on the app and 29% more than standard video posts.”

In the following months, the team wanted to remain consistent in publishing high-quality content and reels. In June, the highest performing post – “Farewell and thank you, Chaplain Phillips!” – reached 21,567 accounts, with 13,477 of those being non-followers.

**The Path Forward:** [According to Fierce Education](#), “A pre-pandemic study by EAB measuring student communication preferences revealed that students are more likely than ever to interact with colleges and universities on social media at all stages of their search, and not just a way to engage students once they’ve decided to apply.”

To compete in the higher education sphere and aid recruitment efforts, VMI must strive to increase followers, reach, and engagement. Due to state regulations, the Institute has no presence on TikTok, but reels allow VMI to maintain relevancy among national schools. To boost recruitment, the digital communications team has identified four goals:

1. Portray post life through videos, specifically reels.
  - a. GOAL: Post at least 1-3 videos each month and use at least one trending sound.
2. Cater to distinct audience on each platform.
3. Feature cadet stories.
4. Showcase the Institute’s core values and mission in social media posts.

**View the reel on Instagram:** <https://bit.ly/VMI-Goes-Viral-2023>



**Additional Social Media Information:**

Yearly analytics trend reports are available as [accessible, downloadable charts](#) to track yearly progress.

## VI. WEB

The VMI Web Team continues to focus on providing timely, accurate, and engaging content across the [vmi.edu](http://vmi.edu) site, with emphasis on best representing the benefits of a VMI education and its varied programs, the successes and achievements of a diverse and talented Corps of Cadets, and important information related to health, safety, and upcoming events. Special project rearrangements and schedule adjustments continue to allow for a focus on recruitment. Large portions of the website are also undergoing overhauls to compete in design and content more directly with other senior military colleges (SMCs) and the service academies, as well as other state and private universities. This is done in partnership with many departments across post, most notably the Dean's office, Commandant's office, and Admission.

The addition of the U360 mobile app for VMI was handled on the technical and design side by the Assistant Director for Digital Communication and did take significant time away from projects on the main [www.vmi.edu](http://www.vmi.edu) site. The addition of the full-time Digital Content Specialist as a permanent position has been key to the web team being able to complete more projects each month, and to create new content focused on [telling the VMI story and providing a human face to cadet life.](#)

The Admissions section of the website continues its constant updates and overhauls to focus on mobile-responsive design, ease of user experience, and inclusion of new contents related to the Post View and Inquiry changes completed by IT, the Assistant Director for Marketing, the Web Team, and Admissions. A complete content and design overhaul was also completed for the Office of Financial Aid webpage to make it a more visually appealing, mobile responsive resource, with clearer information and steps to encourage and ease the process of applying to and affording an education at VMI. The [academics](#) portion of the website received major layout, functionality, and content upgrades. Section and subsection landing pages, such as Academics, Academic Program Research, and Support were refreshed and redesigned using SEO tools and competitor research. The [majors and minors page](#) was redesigned for better mobile experience, and new content was added for every major/degree program to be more consistent with other colleges and universities. These pages are being targeted to balance the three-legged stool on the site and compete more directly with both SMCs and traditional colleges and universities.

## WEBSITE ANALYTICS

*Note: This portion of the report may change moving forward as Google has altered the way it tracks and provides site visit data, starting July 2023.*

### AY22-23 TOTALS AND CHANGE COMPARED TO AY21-22

Site Section	Pageviews	Users	New Users	Avg. Time on Page	Pages/Session
<b>Homepage</b>	775,038 -4.34%	329,253 +21.44%	300,308 +25.34%	02:10 -1.17%	1.27 -4.14%
<b>About</b>	625,894 +14.80%	297,177 +97.80%	233,624 +196.71%	01:34 -9.07%	2.07 -37.35%
<b>News (About)</b>	495,362 +242.99%	393,873 +575.50%	380,759 +819.04%	01:04 -9.18%	1.25 -51.02%
<b>Academics</b>	586,744 +37.91%	301,999 +161.37%	247,479 +298.53%	02:09 +7.02%	1.78 -37.62%
<b>Admissions</b>	209,907 +10.58%	93,795 +35.29%	50,131 +106.03%	02:04 +22.02%	2.68 -32.77%
<b>Apply Page (Admissions)</b>	41,141 +28.67%	19,127 +20.04%	6,746 +63.31%	02:48 +99.68%	2.92 -38.17%
<b>Financial Aid</b>	69,330 +27.62%	39,432 +71.95%	25,301 +214.74%	02:06 +17.51%	2.07 -43.97%
<b>Cadet Life</b>	283,939 -5.82%	163,391 +82.74%	125,664 +165.82%	02:36 -35.46%	1.75 -43.13%

### MOST POPULAR PAGES OF AY22-23 BY PAGEVIEWS

1. Homepage
2. Academics Landing Page
3. Admissions Landing Page
4. Library Landing Page
5. About Landing Page
6. Apply Page [Admissions]
7. Visit Page [Admissions]
8. VMCW Landing Page
9. Cadet Life Landing Page
10. Critical Dates and Academic Calendar

### SUMMARY

Overall, traffic has increased significantly to the VMI website, spurred in large part by social media pushes and increased new content, such as the implementation of Featured Stories written specifically from a marketing/personal interest perspective. Of note are the large increases in traffic to the Admissions and Financial Aid portions of the website, a goal of the digital comms team in coordination with the respective departments. Gains may also be largely attributed to the search engine optimization (SEO) work done in partnership with BrightEdge, a contracted vendor, serving VMI pages to more web users. Both BrightEdge automatic features and the web team while developing content have emphasized page-to-page links to drive traffic throughout the site. Pages per session continues to be a target for the content team, looking to have users

explore more of the site at a time, but this is carefully balanced with making information as easy to find as possible.

### MOST VIEWED NEWS STORIES OF AY22-23

*Note: This table depicts the stories with the most views during the Academic Year, not necessarily items written during the Academic Year. Criticism of VMI still skews searches for content regarding statues, DEI/DOI, and the superintendent.*

Story Title	Pageviews	Date of Publication
<b>Scott Named First Female ROTC Commander at VMI</b>	3,765	July 28, 2022
<b>VMI Welcomes New Pipe Band Director</b>	1,810	Oct. 3, 2022
<b>Maj. Gen. Cedric Wins '85 to lead Virginia Military Institute</b>	1,748	April 15, 2021
<b>VMI Begins to Relocate the Stonewall Jackson Statue</b>	1,663	Dec. 7, 2020
<b>VMI Class of 2024 Celebrates Ring Figure</b>	1,662	Nov. 21, 2022
<b>VMI Ranks No. 5 in Money Magazine Best Colleges List</b>	1,481	May 17, 2022
<b>Rank Announcements Usher in New Corps Leadership</b>	1,448	March 9, 2023
<b>A Look Back: 25 Years of Women</b>	1,423	Sept. 28, 2022
<b>VMI Welcomes New Cadets at Matriculation</b>	1,364	Aug. 22, 2022
<b>Rank Announcements at VMI</b>	1,343	April 19, 2022
<b>Cadet Aims to Grow Produce for VMI</b>	1,292	June 21, 2022
<b>Love Named Chief Diversity Officer at VMI</b>	1,243	May 26, 2021
<b>TAPS—Bill Badgett '53</b>	1,224	Feb. 26, 2020
<b>COW Program Transforms Youths at VMI</b>	1,205	July 14, 2022
<b>Overnight Visits Return to Open Houses</b>	1,199	Nov. 5, 2021

### SUCCESS SNAPSHOT: FEATURED STORIES IN FOCUS

Following the hiring of a permanent Digital Content Specialist and filling the Social Media Specialist position, a goal set by the Digital Communications Team was to focus on human interest pieces, showing the day-to-day life of cadets, particularly focused on “ordinary” college life and how it fits into the extraordinary system of VMI. The idea was to offer insight into how VMI does not remove opportunities due to its military structure, but that cadets are even more impressive for their ability to balance the normal college experience with the rigorous demands of the Institute.

To that end, featured stories were written by these two new employees and featured as homepage bullets, homepage banners, and social media posts. Additionally, each academic department as well as sections of cadet life were given automated content pulls on the website to constantly refresh with these stories as they were published.

There was an **over 500% increase in traffic to the [featured stories subsite](#)** AY22-23 compared to AY21-22 — a direct result from these two positions. The increase is also due to more consistent content, social links with increased fanbase, links on the homepage, and use of departmental story pulls implemented throughout the academics pages.

The dive into featured stories has been able to showcase a different side of VMI — something that sheds light on how cadet life can be like any other college students. The series that showcases clubs at VMI, called “[The Extra Mile](#),” has been a huge hit with our audience. A total of 14 stories in the past six months have resulted in an average of 218 page views with an average of 186 user visits. One story in particular, featuring the [boxing club](#), had 529 page views from 412 users.

These stories differ from the news headlines and are written in a different style. With feature writing, they are more personal and allow to really show a more human element to what the topic at hand is. In many of these stories, the cadets are front and center. Their thoughts and emotions about what they participate in are put front and center.

Fourteen stories have higher than 200 page views, with an average of 304 page views. Some of the higher page view stories include several “Extra Mile” stories, theater production and club efforts, [the history of swim classes at VMI](#), [engineering fair feature](#), [boxing club national awards](#), [honors week](#), and [SURI](#). This shows the diversity in terms of how broad these feature stories can be — and the opportunities to tell even more stories is practically endless.

#### SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO):

Every page on the vmi.edu site is currently undergoing updates and upgrades, some more significant than others. New metatags are being added to the website to increase search engine optimization (SEO) and properly format link sharing across social media and email tools. Additionally, photos are being selected and formatted to include important keywords in their tagging to not only continue to update the site to best represent VMI as it is and hopes to be, but also to target interested applicants, targeting keywords and topics most in competition with service academies, senior military colleges, and other Virginia colleges and universities.

There have already been significant improvements to SEO and vmi.edu visibility. The work done by the web team is facilitated largely by the purchase of the BrightEdge software contract, which does research and analysis that would take multiple staff members months to do, and would never match the 24–48-hour turnaround time of BrightEdge analysis. During the initial months, focus was placed on increasing traffic to pages related to admissions as well as ROTC pages to more closely compete with other SMCs and service academies. The goal is to show not only in searches that target colleges and/or Virginia, but larger terms so those who may not have been considering VMI can be connected, particularly military search terms.

**Improvements in page rank after web team edits, June 25 vs. Jan.1 :**

Keyword	Blended Rank June 25	Blended Rank Change	Page of Google	Monthly Search Volume
military training	21	+ 80	2	4,400
matriculation	44	+57	4	74,000
Air Force ROTC	6	+26	1	5,400
Navy rotc	20	+81	2	2,900
ROTC	36	+65	3	49,500
military civil engineer	16	+85	2	140
engineering mechanical	32	+69	3	110,000
reserve officer training corps	51	+50	5	49,500
cadet	54	+47	5	14,800
online applications	67	+34	7	3,600
military schools	59	+42	5	14,800
Rotc scholarships	9	+24	1	2,900
military university	10	+17	1	1,900

BrightEdge not only incorporates guided edit suggestions for the web team to target terms such as those above, but also does work in the background through coding implemented in conjunction with the assistant director of digital communication to target specific key points Google values in its ranking. This Autopilot tool has brought key search terms to the first page of Google with no ongoing work needed by the C&M team, allowing them to focus on additional terms.

**Some of the biggest “wins” of Autopilot as of June 29:**

Keyword	Previous Page Rank	Current Page Rank	Current Position Rank	Annual Search Volume
naval awards	4	1	7	19200
military academy in va	unranked	1	6	8640
cadet uniforms	unranked	1	7	4680
air force in virginia	unranked	1	8	1680
code of honor military	unranked	1	7	1680
summer transition program	unranked	1	6	1320
military universities in virginia	unranked	1	1	840
marine rotc programs	2	1	8	600
merit scholarships virginia	unranked	1	6	600

<b>Keyword</b>	<b>Previous Page Rank</b>	<b>Current Page Rank</b>	<b>Current Position Rank</b>	<b>Annual Search Volume</b>
uscg aup	unranked	1	3	600
biology in the military	2	1	10	480
matriculation day	unranked	1	5	480
military commissioning ceremony	unranked	1	4	480
regimental training	unranked	1	8	360
air force academy virginia	unranked	1	5	240
aup military	unranked	1	6	240
can you transfer to a military academy	unranked	1	8	240
ftx air force	unranked	1	6	240
stp schedule	unranked	1	9	240
attend stp	unranked	1	5	120
aup aviation	unranked	1	10	120
cadet commissioning ceremony	unranked	1	6	120
military academic	unranked	1	9	120

Moving forward, the goal of the Web Team remains to continue to collaborate closely with the Director of Communications for large scale updates and upgrades with monthly and yearly targets. This includes an eventual overhaul of site navigation for ease of use and less clicks as well as the continued modernization of the overall site.

New systems for requesting web edits and larger scale projects will be implemented for AY23-24 to streamline the process, provide clear reporting, and ensure that all affected parties have all the needed information to provide expedient, high-quality service and end products. The digital communications team looks forward to expanding the pool of content contributors to continue to increase the range of voices and topics represented on the VMI.edu website and support the mission of One Corps, One VMI on the most visible marketing tool of the Institute. A template and navigation overhaul as well as ROTC design and content refreshes and upgrades are the first planned major projects for AY2023-24.

The team will also work closely with Preston Library and Admissions as they launch their own new sites with tools more suited to their specific needs and goals, more in keeping with standard operations of higher education digital presence.



## **Related C&M Plan Status Updates for Goal 2: Enhance Digital and Web-Based Communications**

### **2.1 INCREASED FUNCTIONALITY**

C&M will continue to submit a budget request for a new content management system replacement to address flaws and shortcomings explained in previous reports. The delay in purchase, and therefore implementation, of the new system means that we will continue to see negative impacts with our current system. Most notably, there is often a sizable lag between content updates in the CMS and its reveal on the live website. The current system's customer support has been unhelpful, despite priority status ticket submission. As a result, there should be the expectation that notices on the web may take up to 30 minutes following completion of work to appear live to the public. This will negatively affect the Institute's ability to communicate in a timely fashion during emergency notification situations or public relations concerns such as those we dealt with over the past year with the Washington Post.

With the limitations of our current CMS, the team must constantly write new, custom code to implement modern, mobile-friendly design styles. This takes time away from content overhaul and actual page updates. It has also slowed implementation of a more user-friendly menu structure as new code is often incompatible with the structure of our current site in TerminalFour, our current content management system.

The filling of the vacant Web Administrator position does ease some of the workload and provide more opportunity to upgrade, but the time requirement to rewrite large portions of the site due to CMS limitations makes this a long and tedious process.

### **2.2: MODERN & ENGAGING DESIGN & 2.3: REPRESENTATION & VISIBILITY**

The delay on implementation of a new CMS has forced the Web Team to re-evaluate the concept of a site redesign based on limited staff and problems directly related to the TerminalFour system. New code continues to be implemented to create a smoother mobile device viewing experience. The main goal for 2023 will be to design a mega-menu, a style used by most colleges and universities which allows for quicker access to key pages and provides another location for use of cadet photos and quotes to promote the VMI experience.

There continues to be a focus on recruitment and representation across the vmi.edu site. The Web Team continues to update photos to best represent the current Corps of Cadets and showcase the benefits and uniqueness of a VMI education. With the hire of a new web administrator (late 2022) and digital content specialist (Jan. 2023), the speed of these updates will increase as the workload will once again be divided among a full team. Additionally, these graphics are a key resource for SEO through alternative text, an accessibility requirement, offering a place to include more keywords to target our top competitors. An additional feature of the BrightEdge contract was the implementation of Autopilot. This automated service, which can be customized by the web team, optimizes images for a faster load without quality loss, creating a better mobile experience while also allowing more design freedom.



Upcoming plans for content and design updates include a continued focus on Admissions and Academics along with a review and modernization of ROTC content. The goal remains to continue to increase the recruitment style of all pages and emphasize the breadth and depth of academic offerings to compete with other state colleges and universities, particularly for those non-commissioning recruits.

A complete overhaul of the Bootstrap system used to create the site layout will take longer as a rewrite within TerminalFour as opposed to being able to move to a new CMS complete with up-to-date code structure. The Web Team does plan to work on a new design and code within the current system, but this was on hold for the second half of 2022 due to staffing shortages. The project did begin in spring 2023 and will be launched in phases, beginning summer 2023.

#### 2.4 INCREASE ACCESSIBILITY

Increasing the accessibility of content across the vmi.edu domain continues to be a top priority for the Web Team. Content editors within the CMS have also been contacted as to updated standards for design as they continue to add to the site. During 2022, the Web Team achieved 99% accessibility for all HTML code on the site, and weekly reviews continue to ensure this high success goal.

A complete review and overhaul of all downloadable content is required to officially meet 100% accessibility for the site, as anything presented on the website, such as PDFs, must meet the same standards. An inventory continues of all site content, and the Web Team will work in coordination with content owners to first remove any outdated content versions to not remediate unnecessary items. Research will continue for the possibility of external remediation depending on the number of documents remaining as accessibility remediation is often a full-time role and the current staffing levels do not allow for any member of the team to focus solely on this important user experience and legal requirement project.

Quick guides for overall digital communication accessibility across post are currently being reviewed for dissemination. A guide for email accessibility was provided in 2022 and reshared in 2023. A new guide for accessibility in all products created in Microsoft Office has been created and is currently in review.

#### VII. MARKETING

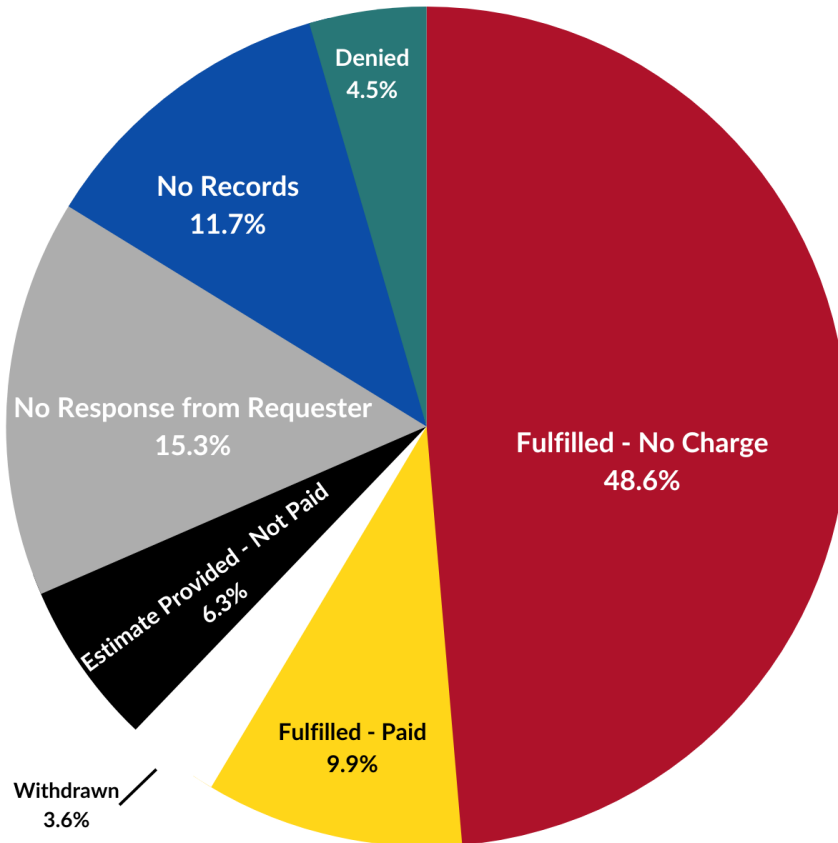
VMI's paid marketing efforts during 2022-2023 have focused solely on increasing yield among appointed cadets.

#### VIII. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

Between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023, VMI responded to 117 FOIA requests. This volume represents an increase of 34.5% over the same period in 2021-2022. Nearly half (53 of 117) of all 2022-23 FOIA requests were filed by four individuals.

State law and VMI General Order 5 govern VMI's response to such requests. GO 5 requires VMI to charge the requester for the actual cost of fulfilling the request if that cost was to exceed \$50. In the spirit of transparency, VMI strives to fulfill FOIA requests with as little or no cost to the requester. During 2022-23, only 16.2% of the time were cost estimates provided to the requester. 64.8% of all requests were processed without cost to the requester.

VMI's FOIA requests are publicly available at <https://vmi.nextrequest.com>.





## 2023-24 Strategic Communications Plan

The VMI Strategic Communications Plan establishes the overall vision for the Institute's communications and marketing efforts for the 2023-24 academic year. The plan addresses several areas in which the Institute must improve its efforts to advance VMI's brand.

### **Mission**

The mission of the VMI Office of Communications & Marketing (C&M) is encapsulated in three words:

*Promote. Protect. Defend.*

Through our efforts in media relations, marketing, social media, and digital communications, C&M promotes, protects, and defends the VMI brand. We promote the good news stories of VMI. We protect the reputation of the Institute by mitigating potential issues. And we defend the reputation of the Institute from misinformation and attacks, internal and external, against the Institute's mission and values.

### **Background**

Founded in 1839, the Virginia Military Institute is the oldest state-supported military college in the United States. Throughout its storied history, VMI has produced leaders and individuals whose daily lives reflect the integrity, fairness, and appreciation for the value of hard work that is instilled at the Institute. Those leaders include seven Medal of Honor recipients, more than 200 general and flag officers, a Nobel Peace Prize winner, 11 Rhodes Scholars, an Episcopal martyr from the Civil Rights movement, members of Congress, governors, CEOs and other leaders of industry.

VMI is consistently ranked among the top liberal arts colleges among the nation.

- U.S. News & World Report: #4 national public liberal arts colleges
- Money Magazine: 4.5 out of 5 stars
- Payscale.com: #2 Best Value in Virginia

The VMI experience is rooted in rigorous academics, military discipline, and competitive athletics. Cadets are challenged in the classroom, on the drill field, and on the field of competition. Honor, integrity, character, civility leadership, and self-discipline are values instilled in each cadet. These values are sorely lacking today and, as such, VMI graduates are among the most recruited college graduates each year. Fully 97% of VMI graduates are employed or in



graduate school within six months of leaving the Institute. 50-55% of cadets commission into the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force Space Force, Coast Guard, or foreign military.

Over the course of the past several years, VMI has been scrutinized by the media for alleged incidents of racism, racial bias, sexual assault, and sexual harassment. The Institute has further come under attack by alumni who believe the Institute is headed in the wrong direction. These alumni continue to spread misinformation, file lawsuits, and malign the school within the media.

### **State of Communications**

The mission of C&M is to promote, protect, and defend the public reputation of the Institute and advance the goals set forth by VMI in its current and forthcoming strategic plans. Over the past three years, this has been achieved through a focus on proactive, positive media relations and the creation of engaging content for VMI's digital communications channels.

C&M is made up of 11 full-time employees and two part-time employees. The department is divided into five functional areas:

- Command Staff
- News & Editorial Services
- Digital Communications
- Brand Marketing
- Publications

C&M leadership, except for the publications manager, have been at VMI for less than four years. Much of that time was consumed by the Institute's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and reactive communications to ongoing attacks in the media. The previous C&M administration focused much of the Institute's communications and marketing resources on publications aimed at internal communications. While print publications have a place among the Institute's older alumni audiences, trends in the communications and marketing industry would suggest efforts need to be refocused on timely, digital communications and external audiences.

C&M faces a number of challenges in their efforts to develop a modern, effective communications and marketing operation. These challenges include:

- **Technology.** C&M is operating with outdated software and equipment. VMI's content management system (website technology) was reviewed by the Institute's Technology Committee in 2018 and recommended for replacement. Budget requests since have gone unfunded.
- **Resources.** A key component of this plan relies on a regular appropriation for paid marketing. VMI's brand marketing would complement and make more effective any recruitment marketing that originates out of Admissions.



Despite the challenges, C&M staff continue to find ways to produce a high-quality work product. This is due in large part to the talent of the team and their dedication to the mission of the Institute.

C&M enjoys a strong partnership with communicators and marketers across post. These include staff in Admissions, the Center for Ethics and Leadership, Athletics, and among the academic departments. Additionally, C&M works very closely with the communications team at the VMI Alumni Agencies.

### **Communications Strategy**

VMI's forthcoming strategic plan, "Forging 21st Century Leaders," establishes five areas of focus for the next 10 years:

- Prepare exceptional leaders.
- Enhance academic excellence.
- Foster esprit de corps.
- Recruit top cadets and boost success.
- Deliver 21st century infrastructure.

Pending approval from the Board of Visitors, the strategic plan sets forth a series of goals and objectives with will be the focus of C&M's communications for the foreseeable future.

The goals and objectives in "Forging 21st Century Leaders" are designed to produce the outcomes outlined in VMI's Unifying Action Plan: One Corps - One VMI:

- Honor. The VMI Honor Code must continue to be a way of life for each and every cadet and alumnus.
- Diversity and inclusion. VMI must ensure that every cadet, regardless of race, gender, religion, or nationality, feels a part of the VMI legacy.
- The VMI brand. The outward face of VMI should be built around young leaders of character who exemplify honor, civility, and service above self. Our brand will be defined by the conduct of the Corps.
- Competing to win. VMI cadets must compete to win in the classroom, on the hill through their cadet life in barracks, and on the field of competition.
- One VMI. VMI's strength is in its diversity of experiences, thought, abilities, and backgrounds. No single cadet's challenge is greater than another's. It is through the reliance on their fellow cadets that the Corps succeeds.

To solidify the brand and tell the VMI story, C&M will use the following tactics:

- Media relations: Proactive media relations are critical to strengthening the positive reputation of the Institute. Messages delivered via news outlets tend to have more credibility among audiences than do advertisements, social media, or institutional websites. Academic, military, or athletics stories of cadets and faculty can be pitched to



hometown news, trade, or general interest outlets across the commonwealth and the nation.

- VMI.edu website: The public-facing website, [www.vmi.edu](http://www.vmi.edu), continues to be one of the most heavily and consistently accessed forms of communication from the Institute to members of the VMI community and the public. From current events coverage to Institute and cadet life information, to academics and ROTC requirements, the website serves as the hub of VMI's digital presence. It encompasses all facets of the Institute and provides a gateway for accessing key information regarding VMI. In particular, the homepage covers topics such as upcoming events, admissions information, events and traditions notices, and emergency communications regarding operational status.
- Social media: Social media allows the Institute to engage with key audiences without the filter and/or cost of other communications channels. Social media allows the Institute to be able to tell the stories of our cadets, faculty, staff, and alumni in a manner that is relatable to those of have gone through the VMI experience and to those who would like to understand more.
- Brand advertising: VMI's advertising efforts provides for the flow of information, unfiltered by other entities, to reach targeted audiences. Our advertising efforts will focus on restoring the reputation of the Institute as a premier institution producing well-educated, leaders of character and will complement current recruitment marketing efforts.
- Internal communications: Internal communications are vital to build an organizational culture that supports a leader's vision for an organization. Surveys and feedback suggest a skepticism of the administration on behalf of the faculty and staff. There exists an opportunity to bridge that gap and instill a strong working relationship among all categories of employees at VMI.

## **Audiences**

VMI has several key audiences and stakeholders, each with their own communications needs. This plan focuses on those audiences who are key to carrying out the VMI's mission. Listed in order of priority, the audiences and stakeholders are:

- Prospective cadets and families
- Legislators and government officials
- Current cadets
- Faculty and staff
- Parents of current cadets
- Lexington – Buena Vista – Rockbridge County community

VMI alumni is another very important audience, however, the primary responsibility for communicating with alumni rests with the VMI Alumni Agencies. C&M staff regularly work with the Agencies' communications team to ensure that messages and initiatives are coordinated. Each of the six key audiences can be broken down into smaller groups based on geography, class standing, department, demographics, or some other characteristic. This allows the Institute to provide targeted messaging to each group based on their communications needs.



## Messages

All messages used by VMI, VMI Athletics, the VMI Alumni Agencies, and the various departments throughout post need to be consistent with VMI's mission:

To produce educated, honorable men and women, prepared for the varied work of civil life, imbued with love of learning, confident in the functions and attitudes of leadership, possessing a high sense of public service, advocates of the American Democracy and free enterprise system, and ready as citizen-soldiers to defend their country in time of national peril.

Strategic messages that will be emphasized during the 2023-24 academic year include:

- VMI develops leaders of character who are committed to service.
- The VMI experience is among the most challenging in the country but in the end is also among the most rewarding.
- VMI continues to adapt to a changing world to meet the needs of the commonwealth and the nation in the classroom and on the drill field.
- VMI is a school where individuals from all walks of life can find their place and succeed.

As important as written messages are, so too are the messages that are portrayed through photography, videography, and graphics. All visual messages will adhere to VMI brand guidelines as set forth in General Order 42, the Institute Identity Standards Policy. This ensures a consistent look to the way that the Institute is portrayed using photography, videography, and graphics.

## Evaluation

Communications & Marketing staff will continually evaluate efforts to determine the effectiveness of stated objectives. Staff will employ both quantitative and qualitative methods of evaluation and make necessary adjustments to tactics moving forward. Benchmarking year-over-year data will provide valuable insight into the effectiveness of VMI's messages.

C&M has access to several tools that will assist in measuring effectiveness of communications and marketing efforts. These tools provide data on:

- Web traffic
- News media reach, frequency, and tone
- Social media mentions, reach, and tone

## Plan Goals & Objectives

### Goal 1: Improve VMI Brand Reputation

#### 1.1 Sustained brand advertising campaign

Conduct a sustained, ongoing advertising campaign in key recruitment areas of Virginia to improve VMI's brand reputation among key audiences especially government officials,





legislators, prospective families, and alumni. **[THIS OBJECTIVE IS RESOURCE DEPENDENT. CURRENTLY C&M DOES NOT HAVE AN ADVERTISING BUDGET.]**

Proposed actions:

- Develop key messages and engaging images that exemplify the VMI brand.
- Develop advertising strategy to complement new cadet recruiting strategies as well as maximize exposure of the brand among key audiences.
- Create and coordinate advertising calendar.

## **1.2 Comprehensive identity and brand guide**

Make certain VMI's bold, strong, and distinguished brand elements and official marks are utilized appropriately on all visual communications.

Proposed actions:

- Bring to life the VMI brand digitally to better education and empower internal and external audiences who partner with and/or represent the VMI brand in any capacity.
- Establish an easy-to-follow digital design guide layout for logos, institutional art, official marks, typography, communications, and social media.
- Rewrite governance policies so there is no question about when, why, where, or how to use VMI brand elements.
- Publish brand guide on VMI.edu.

## **1.3 Boost social media presence and engagement**

Establish compelling content for Institution accounts that reflects VMI's brand and ongoing commitment to excellence within the Corps of Cadets.

Proposed actions:

- Create engaging content that humanizes the VMI experience through compelling and authentic cadet, alumni, staff, and faculty profiles while promoting opportunities to prospective students and families.
- Deliver relevant content to the different VMI audiences with an emphasis on prospective cadets and their families.
- Promote VMI values and achievements.
- Adapt platform-specific approaches to content distribution.

## **1.4 Increase targeted web traffic using search engine optimization**

Implement search engine optimization best practices to increase web traffic from key searches thereby capturing more inquiries for the top of the admissions funnel.

Proposed actions:

- Strategize and coordinate keyword searches with Admissions team.
- Determine areas of improvement for vmi.edu based on best practices designed to maximize targeted web traffic.



## Goal 2: Enhance Digital and Web-Based Communications

### 2.1 Increased functionality

To maximize staff resources with focus on design and creation rather than technical troubleshooting, it is critical that VMI's public website be rebuilt in modern architecture and be hosted by a responsive, skilled system with rapid, accurate support. **[THIS OBJECTIVE IS RESOURCE DEPENDENT.]**

Proposed actions:

- Replace current TerminalFour (T4) content management system and hosting structure to upgrade to a system with:
  - True development, staging, and production servers with seamless content transfer and full version control and backups.
  - Ease of implementation of latest technology and best practices from overall architecture to widgets and interactive components.
  - Clear user roles to protect branding, content, and accessibility standards.

### 2.2 Modern and engaging design

Harness the VMI public website as a marketing and recruitment tool with a design overhaul to incorporate interaction, layout, and mobile-responsive structure with a focus on clear navigation and ease of use for all visitors. **[THE TIMELINE ON THIS OBJECTIVE IS DEPENDENT ON THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR OBJECTIVE 2.1]**

Proposed actions:

- Redesign entire VMI website in phases as necessitated by staffing and resource limitations.
  - Phase 1 & 2: Code cleanup and redesign of menus. [Completed 2022-23]
  - Phase 3: Full rewrite and layout updates of all content focused on SEO and competitor research. [AY24-25 Goal]
  - Phase 4: Distinct subsite redesign of museums, archives, and ROTC to create unique user-experience most aligned with the unique mission of each. [AY24-25 Goal]

### 2.3 Representation and visibility

Ensure that visual and text content across the entire website represents all facets of the VMI experience (academics, military/ROTC, athletics).

Proposed actions:

- Identify full list of content authors and work with S5 staff and department-identified faculty, staff, and cadets to update content and imagery.
- Create web image repository following image audit of site already in progress, partnering with C&M's multimedia coordinator.



- Work with current authors and reach out to new voices to add testimonials, quotes, and stories to more sections of the website.
- Work with all departments to coordinate messaging along web and print marketing / recruitment materials.

#### **2.4 Increase accessibility**

Review and remediate all web-based content (code, images, downloadable documents, videos) to ensure adherence to state and federal accessibility standards and best practices.

Proposed actions:

- Continue to utilize Dubbot contract for code analysis and begin document analysis and remediation for all hosted PDFs.
- Continue to provide training and resources to VMI faculty and staff on best-practices.
- Research potential vendors for large-scale document remediation and video captioning as current staffing levels do not support the increasing need.
- Remove outdated/unused content and downloads from website.
- Remediate priority downloads in-house.

### **Goal 3: Increase Positive Awareness of VMI through Strategic Public Relations**

#### **3.1 Develop and improve relationships among regional media**

Through the use of strategic media relations, place stories and information about VMI's people and programs among key Virginia and regional media outlets.

Proposed actions:

- Identify key Virginia and regional news outlets based on targeted recruitment areas, alumni demographics, and legislative strategy.
- Focus on pitching stories to cadet hometown papers to share positive messages of the VMI experience and add to awareness of VMI in key areas around the country.

#### **3.2 Develop engaging content for use across multiple channels**

Written, video, photo, and graphic content will be developed and distributed throughout VMI's web, social media, and print platforms.

Proposed actions:

- Content should use the most engaging manner in which to communicate (e.g. visual reinforces written):
  - Excellence and / or rigor of academic programs.
  - Uniqueness of the VMI experience.
  - Legislative and policy priorities.
  - Commitment and service of VMI cadets, faculty, and staff.
  - Focus areas of strategic and unifying action plans.



- Career and financial benefits of choosing VMI and commissioning (ROI).

### **3.3 Cultivate faculty to serve as experts and respond to timely media requests**

VMI faculty are among the most talented in their respective areas of expertise. Using them as subject matter experts within the media raises their profiles among their peers and boosts the reputation of VMI.

Proposed actions:

- Collaborate with dean's office and academic departments to identify experts in topics relevant to today's news.
- Develop a list of faculty members who are interested in participating to include contact information (cell phone numbers) and areas of expertise.
- Work with faculty to prepare for media opportunities.
- Be a consistent and responsive resource for media contacts when a story needs an expert.

### **3.4 Upgrade technology and skills**

Institutions of higher education compete in a highly competitive environment. Technology and quality work product are necessary to ensure VMI is able to deliver strategic brand messages effectively.

Proposed actions:

- Conduct an evaluation of equipment and systems for the current media and information environment.
- Cross-train employees in different disciplines such as photo / video as well as web content maintenance.
- Develop a plan to replace antiquated technology and systems with state-of-the-art systems and equipment to serve VMI's public relations needs with specific focus on web content and digital asset management technology.
- Review C&M org chart as well as employee work profiles and update as necessary.

## **Goal 4: Improve Internal Communications**

### **4.1 Raise awareness of "Forging 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leaders" strategic plan**

Pending approval from the Board of Visitors, "Forging 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leaders" is the first strategic plan for the Institute in 20 years. It will be important for cadets, faculty, and staff to buy into the final plan for it to be successful.

Proposed actions:

- Develop a web presence for the strategic plan that is both informative and transparent and tracks key milestones for the goals and objectives.



- Rollout the plan at a series of meetings with various cadet, faculty, and staff groups including Corps leaders and organizations, academic departments, and staff functions.

#### **4.2 Increased faculty / staff interaction among senior executives**

Faculty and staff continue to express a desire to be able to interact with the superintendent and key members of the leadership team.

Proposed actions:

- Conduct regular town hall-style meetings at the departmental level to better understand the challenges necessary for faculty and staff to do their jobs.
- Conduct site visits and briefings with various departments around post.
- Highlight individual faculty and staff member accomplishments on the Institute's social media channels.

#### **4.3 Recognition and appreciation**

Recognize and celebrate the achievements, milestones, and contributions of individuals and teams within the VMI community.

Proposed actions:

- Develop engaging web / social media content that highlights a faculty or staff member's contributions to the VMI experience. These stories can include:
  - Outstanding performance.
  - Innovation.
  - Long-term dedication.
  - Adversity.

# VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE

LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA 24450-0304

## VMI MUSEUM SYSTEM

Phone 540.464.7334

Fax 540.464.7112

**DATE:** 31 August 2023

**MEMO TO:** External Relations Committee, VMI Board of Visitors

**FROM:** BG Dallas Clark, Deputy Superintendent for Finance and Support

**SUBJECT:** Update on the Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) Plan to Remove the Confederate Memorial, SEC 16.

In their 2022 final report, the Army Naming Commission recommended the removal of the bronze portion of the Confederate Memorial located in Section 16, ANC. The monument is the work of Moses Ezekiel, VMI 1867, who is buried at the base of the memorial.

Governor Youngkin has formally stated his desire for the statue to remain at ANC, but if it is removed, that it come to the Commonwealth for re-installment. One possible new site for the memorial identified by the Governor's staff is the Virginia Museum of the Civil War (VMCW), New Market Battlefield State Historical Park (NMBSHP).

The statue is currently federal property and located on federal land; removal triggers the requirement to fulfill two federal statutes: the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Environmental Impact Survey (EIS) and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 Review. (To learn more, please visit:

<https://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/About/Confederate-Memorial-Removal> .)

Because VMCW/NMBSHP is a potential site, VMI has been asked to participate in the EIS and Section 106 process. While VMI does not have a position on the removal or re-location, it is considered prudent to be a part of the federal process for reasons of information gathering and fact sharing. Accordingly:

- Cols Keith Gibson, Jeff Boobar, and Kim Parker attended (without comment) an August 23 ZOOM meeting designed to identify the scope of the project—the first of three legislatively mandated public meetings.
- On Monday, August 28, Col David Howlett and Major Sosten Rivale, both of the US Army Legal Services Agency which is working with the ANC statue removal committee, visited NMBSHP to gather information on the site.
- On Tuesday, August 29, Col Gibson received a phone call from Ms. Vanessa Hinkle, USA Corps of Engineers, who is putting together the EIS, seeking general information about the NMBSHP site.

As VMI Preservation Officer, Col Gibson will coordinate with the ANC committee, Corps of Engineers, and other federal and state entities (DGS, DHR, Governor's staff) as well as VMI offices who will have a part of what is anticipated to be a lengthy process of review, recommendations, and implementation.











Virginia Military Institute  
Lexington, Virginia