

# VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE

LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA 24450-0304

## Board of Visitors Meeting November 30, 2023

A meeting of the VMI Board of Visitors was held virtually via Zoom on November 30, 2023, pursuant to public notice. The meeting was livestreamed to the public via YouTube and is archived at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1awWAUgCew>.

### Board of Visitors members present:

Thomas R. Watjen '76 (from Smith Hall)  
John Adams '96  
Ernie Edgar '87  
Hugh Fain '80  
Conrad Garcia  
Teddy Gottwald '83  
Jamie Inman '86  
Lester Johnson '95  
Jim Joustra '76  
Gussie Lord '01  
Scot Marsh '81  
Terry McKnight '78  
Nancy Phillips  
Maj. Gen. Jim Ring '88  
Kate Todd  
Damon William '90

### Others present in Smith Hall:

Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85  
Brig. Gen. Dallas Clark '99  
Brig. Gen. Bob Moreschi  
Col. Adrian Bogart '81  
Col. John Young  
Col. Lee Rakes  
Jim Miller  
Patrick O'Leary '90  
Alyssa Astphan  
Ed Johnson '79  
David Prasnicki

### Participating virtually:

Col. Bill Wyatt

### Absent (excused)

Meaghan Mobbs

1. Tom Watjen called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.
2. Watjen welcomed new board member Kate Todd who was appointed by Gov. Youngkin to fill the vacancy created by the passing of Lt. Gen. Dominy. Mr. Watjen also noted Ms. Todd will assume committee appointments on the Cadet and Military Affairs, Nominating and Governance, and Audit, Finance, and Planning committees.
3. Hugh Fain made a motion to approve the Sept. 12-13, 2023, Board of Visitors meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Conrad Garcia. The motion passed unanimously.
4. Maj. Gen. Wins briefed the board on the proposed strategic plan and changes made since it was originally introduced to the board at the September board meeting. He



encouraged the board to approve the proposed strategic plan. The draft plan and Maj. Gen. Wins' brief are attached to these minutes as **Appendix I**.

- Ernie Edgar moved the adoption of the strategic plan. Gussie Lord seconded the motion. There were no objections. Kate Todd abstained. The motion passed and the strategic plan is adopted.
- Tom Watjen told the board that more work is being done on the proposed transgender policy and procedures. Maj. Gen. Wins said he has asked VMI's general counsel to provide a legal brief on the transgender issue to the board during the January 2024 board meeting. The proposed policy will be considered by the Cadet and Military Affairs Committee and will be brought to the full board at the appropriate time.

Jim Joustra expressed a desire to consult experts in the field to ensure a safe experience and environment for all cadets. He said the board should determine what's best for VMI with respect to transgender policies and procedures going forward even if that requires legal challenges.

Mr. Edgar inquired about the timeline for enacting policies and procedures. He asked if VMI needs to adopt policies and procedures prior to June 2024 to accommodate the incoming rat class. Maj. Gen. Wins said that timeline is correct.

Teddy Gottwald said the proposal put forward at the October 31 Executive Committee meeting was not consistent with the state's model guidelines and said the full analysis of the law had not been done. He said it would be a mistake to debate what's being proposed at the January 2024 full board meeting. Gottwald encouraged a full analysis of the law and then an analysis of a range of options including legal risk and risk to changing the nature of VMI and the Corps of Cadets.

Pat O'Leary said he would prepare a memo and provide a legal brief at the next Board of Visitors meeting.

- The superintendent briefed the group on the athletic budget. He reiterated the value and importance of athletics at VMI. Maj. Gen. Wins emphasized the correlation between athletic performance and athletic funding noting VMI is at the very bottom of Southern Conference schools in terms of operational funding. He provided seven strategies to be implemented to address the athletic budget moving forward. Maj. Gen. Wins briefing is attached to these minutes as **Appendix II**.

Mr. Gottwald asked about strategies being implemented to address expenses in the current fiscal year. Jim Miller, VMI athletic director, said the strategies outlined are long-term strategies and will not have a significant impact on this year's budget.



8. Gussie Lord encouraged board members to review the weekly admissions reports. She gave an update on current numbers.
9. Mr. Gottwald highlighted the objective in the approved strategic plan to improve communications and marketing efforts. He encouraged the Institute to hire an outside public relations firm to help guide VMI in its efforts for improved and enhanced awareness. Mr. Joustra and John Adams concurred.

Lester Johnson inquired about the cost of bringing on a third-party firm. Mr. Joustra suggested it would cost “six figures.” Col. Wyatt said it would more likely be “seven figures.”

10. Mr. Watjen asked for a motion to move the board into closed session. The motion was made by Mr. Gottwald and seconded by Mr. Fain. The motion passed unanimously, and the Board of Visitors entered closed session at 10:32 a.m. to discuss:
  - a. Matters related to the employment, assignment, appointment, or performance of specific public officers, appointees, or employees, and evaluation of performance of departments or schools of public institutions of higher education pursuant to Va. Code Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1), relating the Superintendent’s performance review and of special staff and the evaluation of specific departmental operations.
  - b. Consultation with legal counsel regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel pursuant to Va. Code Section 2.2-3711 (A) (7), pertaining to actual or probable litigation of the Institute.
  - c. Consultation with legal counsel regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel pursuant to Va. Code Section 2.2-3711 (A) (8).
11. The Board of Visitors returned to open session at 11:41 a.m. Mr. Fain made a motion seconded by Mr. Gottwald to certify the closed session. The motion passed unanimously. Each board member was then asked, via roll call, to certify that only matters lawfully exempted from public disclosure and only those matters identified in the closed session motion were discussed in closed session. Board members Adams, Edgar, and McKnight left the closed session before it’s conclusion. They certified via email the portion of closed session for which they were in attendance. Their emails are attached to these minutes as **Appendix III**.
12. Mr. Fain made a motion to approve the superintendent’s performance objectives discussed during closed session. Mr. Garcia seconded the motion. There were no objections. Kate Todd abstained. The motion passed and the performance objectives are approved.



13. Mr. Fain made a motion to adjourn that was seconded by Mr. Gottwald. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 11:44 a.m.
14. Written comments were submitted prior to the meeting by several individuals. The comments are attached as **Appendix IV**.

Respectfully submitted,

Col. Bill Wyatt  
Acting Secretary, VMI Board of Visitors

DRAFT



# APPENDIX I



# Forging 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leaders

Strategic Plan 2023–2033

Bill Wyatt - 2023/05/12 19:50 UTC  
Virginia Military Institute

# Letter from the Superintendent



It is through the VMI experience that many of the nation's top military leaders, captains of industry, and guardians of democracy have been forged. The success of our graduates is tied to a steadfast adherence to a personal credo, first taught and then embraced, and then instilled in others. A creed where our graduates have the confidence to achieve things—at times never thought possible—ensconced in a culture of honor, integrity, and civility.

This is nothing new. For more than 184 years, VMI has been at the heart of fulfilling our nation's need for citizen-soldiers. Over time, a succession of Institute leaders has maintained a watchful eye over the activities on post while in constant pursuit of mission-readiness for the future. We now find ourselves at similar crossroads, requiring the Institute to reinforce its non-negotiables: our unwavering commitment to core values, defining the requirements for graduate preparedness, and delivering on the expectations for alumni success.

Although we have accomplished much over the decades, we must continue forging a path forward. In the ever-changing landscape of higher education, we are determined for VMI to be the premier small liberal arts college and to operate fully as a leadership laboratory for young men and women. Forging 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leaders is intended to help us realize this vision by leveraging academic advancements through which we can achieve operational excellence while being ever vigilant about year over year affordability for VMI families. Done successfully, the VMI diploma will be strengthened and enhanced, ensuring the honorable graduates

we produce enter the workforce prepared to succeed and ready to overcome the formidable challenges of the coming decades.

The future of VMI is incredibly bright as we endeavor to keep pace with a dynamic, ever-changing world that requires preparedness, advances technology, is shaped through evolving teaching methods, demands critical thinking skills, values personal character, and the ability to operate under pressure, while constantly adhering to a life of honor and integrity. No place in our nation attempts to ascend these milestones better than VMI. We are the bastion of this worthy cause and our graduates are the clear result of what we do. Forging strong leaders who courageously embrace selfless service remains the driving force in all we do.

I invite you to explore the pages that follow, which include a careful outline of our path forward built around five key initiatives focused on delivering on five enduring outcomes. Each are built on the almost two centuries of progress achieved thus far through a proven VMI experience. Following a thoughtful and comprehensive review that revalidates the mission and vision of VMI, we are confident of our path forward which can only be accomplished with those engaged and committed to the Institute.

Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85  
U.S. Army (retired)  
Superintendent

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Virginia Military Institute believes that the measure of a college lies in the quality and performance of its graduates and their contributions to society. Therefore, it is the mission of Virginia Military Institute 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.

This plan builds upon the Institute's historic success and will enhance and preserve the VMI experience for years to come. The intent of the Forging 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leaders Strategic Plan is to shape the Institute's actions around these initiatives to deliver on the five enduring outcomes of the One Corps-One VMI: Unifying Action Plan:

1. commitment to honor,
2. diversity and inclusion,
3. the VMI brand,
4. competing to win, and
5. one VMI.

VMI continues to deliver its unique method of education, thereby producing leaders of character who will positively influence their communities.



## The Vision Guiding the Process

**“There was no stone left unturned in the development of this plan. Every aspect of cadet life, taking into account the needs of the future and the successes of the past, were considered. This plan reflects input from cadets, faculty, staff, alumni, parents, and many others.”—Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins ‘85, Superintendent.**

The VMI vision is to be the premier small college in the nation, unequaled in producing educated and honorable citizen-leaders, with a global reputation for academic excellence.

### Making the Vision a Reality

The process for developing this plan began in 2022, and is built upon the success of previous strategic documents such as Vision 2039 and the One Corps—One VMI Unifying Action Plan, as well as the Superintendent’s Initial Planning Guidance, which was developed starting in 2021. Many VMI stakeholders were involved and provided input throughout the process, which included reviewing and reaffirming the mission and vision of the Institute. Focus groups comprised of VMI faculty, staff, members of the Board of Visitors, and cadets met regularly to determine the highest strategic priorities in the areas of military, academics, athletics, and culture. More than 2,400 alumni, parents, cadets, and other VMI stakeholders completed a survey and shared what they believed were the most important aspects of VMI. This valuable input helped shape the future priorities.

In January 2023, the strategic plan steering committee synthesized information from the focus groups and survey to develop the plan priorities and objectives. The VMI Board of Visitors reviewed the draft plan at their April 2023 meeting. The board’s feedback was incorporated, and the resulting strategic plan was considered by the Board of Visitors at a November 2023 meeting.

As we work toward our 2039 bicentennial, we envision a VMI that will:

- » Grow and retain a Corps strength at operational capacity.
- » Be a first-choice destination for talented students, faculty, and staff.

- » Retain and graduate cadets at rates that rival the best institutions in the nation.
- » Have 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.
- » Develop and graduate honorable men and women who serve with courage and compassion, with a goal of more than half commissioning in the US Armed Forces, and additional quarter serving in other public service roles.

In the implementation of this plan, we are committed to achieving the Institute’s mission by protecting our time-honored culture and traditions and maintaining the elements fundamental to the VMI experience, namely:

- » A single-sanction honor system that reinforces integrity and is fair.
- » A Class System that promotes accountability and camaraderie.
- » A Regimental System that promotes leader development.
- » A rigorous academic curriculum that challenges cadets to think critically and encourages ethical reasoning.
- » An enduring commitment to preparing graduates for a life of service to the nation and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

## VMI Values

### Honor

Honor is the heart and bedrock of the VMI experience.

The VMI Honor Code has been fundamental since the school's beginning in 1839. "A cadet will not lie, cheat, steal, nor tolerate those who do." VMI's unique, single-sanction Honor System is foundational to the culture of the Institute. Living the Honor Code establishes the framework for an honorable life.

Beyond our code, VMI seeks to develop men and women who live lives of integrity. Choosing to do the right thing even when there's an easier path, and treating others with dignity and respect, should be hallmarks of a VMI graduate. These are foundational to the VMI mission of producing "honorable men and women prepared for the varied work of civil life..."

The VMI Honor System's strength is the expectation of adherence to the high standards of ethical behavior offering no tolerance for aberrations. More than a set of rules and regulations, the objective of the honor code is the inculcation of honor as a lifestyle. The application of honor is accomplished through conscientious daily decisions undertaken by each individual cadet in all facets of their lives.

### Excellence

VMI has a long history of excellence. The VMI experience is predicated on pushing cadets to be the best version of themselves, reaching targets and goals that stretch themselves to new limits.

VMI graduates' noteworthy accomplishments are exemplified through Seven Medal of Honor recipients, 11 Rhodes Scholars, 1 Nobel Peace Prize winner, 1 Pulitzer Prize winner, 293 general and flag officers, 2 Virginia Governors, numerous state and federal legislators, and many business executives in the fields of science, defense, security, engineering, and manufacturing. Leaders emerge from VMI irrespective of their chosen path.

Pursuing excellence is the standard at VMI, not just in the classroom, but in every aspect of a cadet's life: academics, military, extra-curricular, and athletics. It is a hallmark of a VMI graduate.

### Self-Discipline

Cadets learn very quickly there are deep wells of strength that are seldom used but are called upon to succeed at VMI. With each day of one's cadetship, our cadets learn to do tasks that are seemingly insignificant but, in the end, develop in them the qualities of attention to detail and time management which results in them accomplishing more than they believed possible. From sunup to sundown, they are responsible for performing the duties of a cadet,

**"This institution gave me not only a standard for my daily conduct among men, but it endowed me with a military heritage of honor and self-sacrifice."**—*Gen. George C. Marshall, VMI Class of 1901.*

### Timeline

**2021–2022**

Maj. Gen. Wins' assessment and listening tour, followed by development and dissemination of Superintendent's Initial Planning Guidance.

**Oct. 2022**

The process begins: Focus groups representing faculty, staff, alumni, and stakeholders.

**Jan. 2023**

A review and reaffirmation of the existing mission and vision of VMI.

**Jan. 2023**

Stakeholder off-site, arriving at the five key strategic initiatives.

**Feb.–July 2023**

Worked through each initiative to set objectives and measurements of effectiveness.

**Fall 2023**

Presented and approved by the VMI Board of Visitors.

including military training, attending classes, studying, parades, competing in NCAA or club athletics, and more, all while managing their time for eating, sleeping, and bonding with their brother rats. This self-discipline is developed throughout their time as cadets and is a valuable asset for the rest of their lives.

## **Courage**

VMI is no ordinary college. High school students who apply for admission to VMI recognize this truth. As their friends are applying to schools, it takes courage to choose the VMI experience. That courage is an early sign of a successful cadet, and transitions to accepting leadership positions within the Corps of Cadets, standing up for brother rats, training new cadets, speaking up when the VMI Honor Code is violated, and taking the oath to serve within the U.S. armed forces, as a public servant, or in private industry.

Developing and exercising the moral and physical courage to stand up as a leader and also be a principled follower in a rapidly changing world is a cornerstone of a cadetship at VMI.

## **Esprit de Corps**

Although a VMI cadetship is challenging from the start, there is no lack of support in the toughest moments. No single cadet's challenges are greater than another's. No one is left behind, no one struggles alone. Embracing these tenets is at the heart of "one corps, one VMI." The entirety of the VMI community deliberately accepts and promotes their connection to the Institute, reflecting the lifetime friendships that are the norm. The strong sense of belonging is a hallmark of VMI directly connected to recruitment, retention, job placement, post-graduation networking, and a long-term connection and service to the Institute, to include philanthropic support. The involvement of alumni through service and philanthropy has direct financial impact on the ability to sustain and deliver excellence in all aspects of the VMI Mission.

The characteristics of this strong community attract faculty, staff, and cadets to VMI. Graduates of the Institute remain steadfastly involved and connected to each other and to the Institution.

## **Selfless Service**

At VMI, self-centered pride takes a backseat to selfless service. From Matriculation Day to the commissioning ceremony, where more than half the graduating class enters the services of the U.S. military, selflessness becomes a way of life.

Many hold leadership positions within the Regimental or Class System or as an athletic team captain or as cadet in charge of a club. They sacrifice time, lead from the front, offer ideas, and develop those around them as they serve.

There are no days off from being a VMI cadet. It's not uncommon to hear of a cadet on furlough, being of service to someone in need.

Success does not come from taking someone's seat at the table. Instead, it comes with honorable service and hard work.

## **Resilience**

Mental toughness inspires cadet life. They get tired, get knocked down, and take some tough hits, but it's how they react and recover that makes them special.

It takes a level of grit just to apply to VMI. Then starting as early as Matriculation Day, a cadet's resilience is tested regularly. There is no shame in asking for or receiving help, and help is readily available.

Cadets face challenges each day on the field of competition, in the classroom, and as they prepare for the battlefield and the boardroom. There's no fear in failure, but rather a motivation for doing better the next time.

Resilient leaders at VMI are developed through the constant pressure to prioritize requirements and strive for excellence in response to the rigorous demands of a cadetship.

## The Plan

The VMI experience is a time-tested program that develops cadets into citizen soldiers. This strategic plan focuses on the initiatives, resources, and infrastructure necessary to positively mold future generations of the VMI family into strong effective leaders, be it within their communities, respective military branch, or chosen profession.

Forging 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leaders sets five strategic initiatives for the Institute:

- » Prepare exceptional leaders.
- » Enhance academic excellence.
- » Foster esprit de corps.
- » Recruit top cadets and boost success.
- » Deliver 21<sup>st</sup> century facilities.

These five initiatives support our longstanding mission and help us move ever closer to achieving our vision. The mission and vision remain

unchanged—to be an anchor in an ever-changing world.

**“VMI graduates are making a difference in the lives of their soldiers, co-workers, and families. To continue to deliver on our mission, the VMI experience must refine, enhance, and adapt to meet the ever-changing needs of our communities, commonwealth, and nation.”—Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85, Superintendent.**

### Forging 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leader Initiatives



## Initiative

# Prepare Exceptional Leaders

"I continually seek out leadership opportunities and place myself in challenging situations to grow as a leader. I think that's what VMI is all about. I think it's about pushing yourself, challenging yourself, trying to grow as a person, trying to grow as a leader, to ultimately be prepared for what faces us once we graduate."—  
*Mark Shelton II '24, class regimental commander.*

## Goal

**Execute the premier leadership development program in the nation, and develop a Corps of Cadets that is mentally tough, academically astute, physically fit, and for which the Honor System, Regimental System, Class System, and Rat Line are the foundational backbone.**

Embarking upon the VMI leadership journey is a courageous undertaking for any new cadet. It's a challenge not meant to be easy, and our system is time tested. Forging 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leaders seeks to strengthen and supplement this leadership journey to produce strong future leaders for the nation and commonwealth.

## Objectives

- 1. Teach, coach, mentor, guide, and direct cadets through the VMI training model to help them develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to become effective leaders.**

Our country needs leaders of character now more than ever. VMI serves this need by developing men and women who think and act ethically, lead by example, inspire confidence, and are willing to work hard to achieve their goals. They endure rigorous training that promotes resilience and perseverance. Opportunities for cadets to hone their leadership skills are many and varied. Examples include participation in club sports, extracurricular activities, academic clubs and honor societies, Center for Leadership and Ethics programs, and the regimental

and class systems. Similarly, through NCAA athletics, leadership opportunities abound on the field of competition where individual and team skills are demonstrated. Our unique method of education, symbolized by a three-legged stool (academics, military, athletics), has produced Rhodes Scholars, numerous military leaders, and captains of industry. We intend to continue this great tradition and find ways to improve upon it. We strive to elevate VMI's approach to leader development to world-renowned status.



**2. Ensure cadets receive mentally and physically challenging experiences that lead to meaningful personal and professional development.**

Our curricular and co-curricular rigor at VMI is unmatched. Cadets are required to complete a holistic academic experience and participate in physical training and athletic programs designed to challenge and develop them. To provide an optimal experience, we must balance a schedule that prioritizes the essential

functions of cadet daily life that results in individual and collective health and wellness. To this end, we intend to optimize the academic and physical training schedules in ways that best promote cadets' personal and professional development. In this pursuit, we will work to ensure that the learning experiences we

provide are mentally and physically demanding, and importantly, designed, implemented, and evaluated in alignment with cutting edge research. Increasing Summer Transition Program participation will also play a key role in achieving this objective.

**3. Prepare cadets for a wide variety of opportunities for service upon graduation, such as commissioning in the U.S. armed forces and employment with governmental agencies or private industry.**

Cadets are required to participate in ROTC during their cadetship. For many, ROTC leads to a commission into the armed forces, helping us reach our mission to produce leaders who are prepared to defend their

nation in times of peril. This form of service is, and will remain, an Institute priority. We also recognize service comes in many forms, including employment as a civilian in a federal or state agency, or in the business

sector. For those who do not have the benefit of summer military training, we can augment their experience with internships, undergraduate research, and study abroad.

**4. Increase opportunities for the VMI community to serve, debate ideas candidly and civilly, and nurture esprit de corps.**

Experiential learning is a key component of leadership development. This type of learning provides cadets with meaningful ways to integrate their knowledge, skills, and experience. It also provides opportunities

for cadets to engage with individuals from diverse backgrounds and creates opportunities for cadets to assume leadership positions and practice their skills. Given the importance of these experiences, we

intend to expand current opportunities by, among other things, increasing leadership funding support and the number of leadership experiences, events, and activities offered by the Center for Leadership and Ethics.

**5. Explore the value-added opportunity of expanding the Institute's exceptional leadership training model and reputation in new and innovative ways.**

We have an exceptional leadership development model that prepares leaders for all walks of life. Questions abound about whether this model should be expanded to a broader group of aspiring leaders, and if so, how would its design and implementation best align with and strengthen our mission. Thus, we need to determine if expansion into areas like undergraduate research and micro credentials makes sense, and if so, how, exactly, it should be undertaken.

traditions will be top priorities in this value-added exploration.

Additionally, leveraging existing initiatives, such as the Peay Endowment, provides unexplored opportunities to attract VMI graduates as faculty. Offering a continuing education or graduate program may be a catalyst to achieve this end more expeditiously. Maintaining and preserving the Institution's mission, culture, and



# Initiative

## Strengthen Academic Excellence

*“VMI needs to continue enhancing innovative approaches to ensure a learning environment for cadets that will set them up for success in their chosen academic path.”—Brig. Gen. Robert “Bob” Moreschi, Dean of Faculty and Deputy Superintendent for Academics.*

### Goal

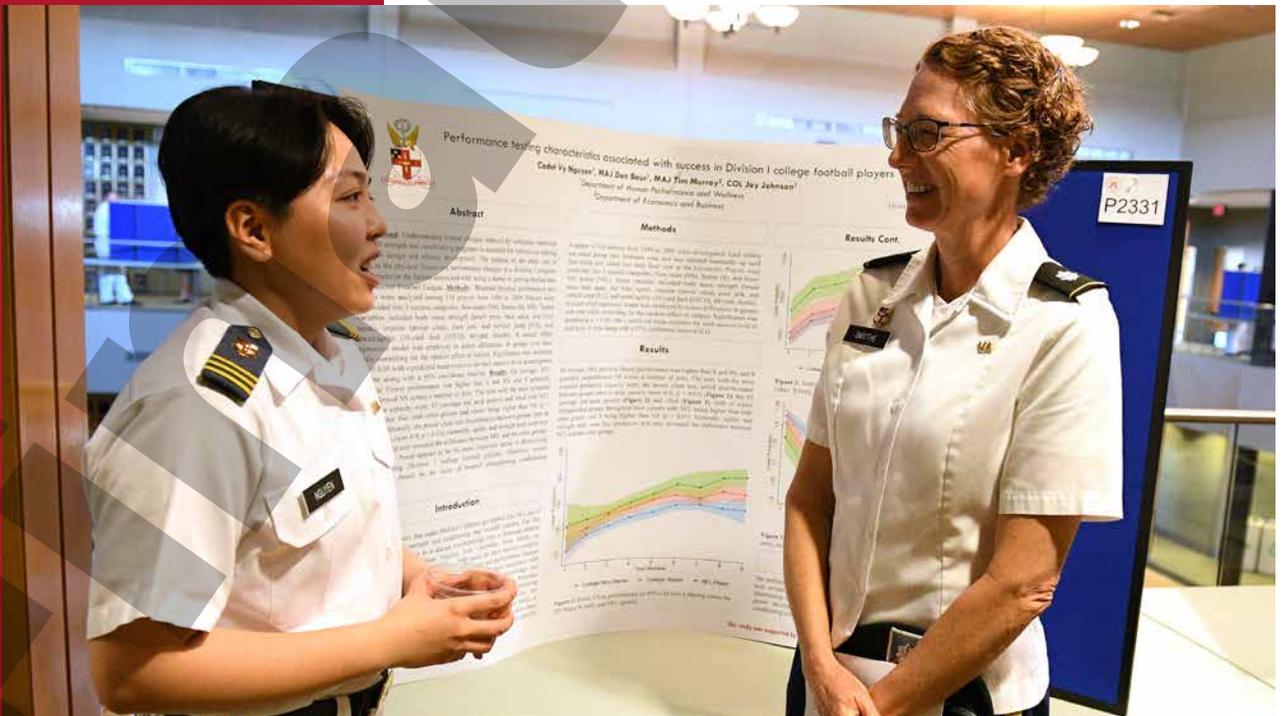
**Provide the nation and commonwealth’s future leaders with a world-class education and training regimen.**

Historically, higher education has been a place for change. Since the early days of post-secondary education in the United States, colleges and universities have been innovating through research and pedagogy. We must continue to adapt to teaching 21<sup>st</sup> century cadets, fostering innovation in our classrooms and laboratories.

#### 1. Enhance effective pedagogical approaches to promote cadet engagement and enhance academic achievement.

VMI has a renowned reputation for its commitment to highly personalized educational experiences. With average class sizes of about 16 and a current student-to-faculty ratio of about 10 to 1, we are a standout among competitors in providing engaging learning experiences. To continue to build on prior successes and to integrate innovative educational approaches, VMI seeks to leverage the science of academic motivation and human learning. Three significant actions are planned:

1. evaluate, and revise, as needed, the core curriculum, to ensure the courses and content remain relevant and the instructional practices are effective,
2. increase faculty development in the science of learning and academic motivation, and
3. evaluation and revision of faculty teaching to align with evidence-based professional development.





Virginia Military Institute, in collaboration with Virginia Tech, held a 12-week internship for high school students, funded by a workforce development grant from the Commonwealth Cyber Initiative. The grant seeks to build a pipeline of mentorship in which graduate students from Virginia Tech, (with more knowledge and experience on cyber security topics) mentor VMI cadets, and in turn the cadets mentor local high school students. The goal of the internship is to teach the high school students how to develop practical hardware, software, and cybersecurity skills through in-person practical learning and self-paced online training.

## 2. Integrate new technology into our educational and organizational processes.

We are committed to staying current with changes within the higher education landscape. VMI must be a leader in the industry by deploying new technologies that are appropriate to increase learning

and motivation and that educate, train, and prepare cadets for success post-graduation. This includes creating hybrid classrooms that provide classroom access to traveling cadets and purchasing state-of-the-art lab

equipment for STEM courses. These efforts will help VMI attract talented cadets and faculty, provide more opportunities for grant-funded research, and ensure cadets are better prepared for varied workplaces.

## 3. Recruit, retain, and promote distinguished faculty with expertise in emerging fields.

To educate the best and brightest cadets in ways that provide an exceptional educational experience, we must attract, develop, and retain outstanding professors able to update and improve upon the relevance of VMI's educational programming. Hiring processes will focus on and be committed to finding faculty who

are committed to the mission of the Institute, alumni and non-alumni alike, and who have a strong interpersonal interest in the daily lives of cadets. Hiring VMI alumni into faculty positions is an essential characteristic in maintaining the culture of the Institute. VMI faculty do more than teach and publish, they lead by

example. We want to continue to attract faculty of high integrity and capability who want to serve as role models, grow personally and professionally, actualize their full potential, and contribute significantly to their discipline and the Institute's mission.

## 4. Strengthen high-impact practices and experiential learning, such as undergraduate research, global learning, internships, and service-learning activities.

Participation in high-impact practices currently offered by VMI, including undergraduate research, internships, and study abroad, have been shown to both enhance learning and improve retention. Given their

importance to cadets' learning and success, we want to maximize the potential of these high-impact practices. Achieving this end will require examining our current funding support for these practices and

leveraging new research and services offered by leading organizations such as the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U).

## Initiative

### Foster Esprit de Corps

**“The brother rat spirit is unlike anything that I’ve ever seen. And I know people probably say that a lot, but just the trust and the shared suffering, just knowing that we all did it together, and we went through all of the same things together, makes it so much of a tighter bond. Being able to see my brother rat excel at everything they do and how much I support them and how much they support me is unlike anything.”—Carter Hugate '24, S6 captain and Moe the Kangaroo.**

## Goal

**Facilitate a supportive, respectful, and professional operating environment for cadets, faculty, staff, and alumni.**

Alumni, faculty, staff, and parents make up the tight knit VMI Community. This strategic plan seeks to rally the community around this common mission, facing current events, celebrations, accomplishments, and concerns head-on, together.

### 1. Advance efforts that foster a safe, diverse, and inclusive environment.

We strive to make VMI safer, more diverse, and inclusive. We will work to advance these efforts in ways that are appropriate for our mission and that resonate with the VMI community. To do so, we will focus efforts on system-level policies and procedures and the use of science-based practices and programming recommended by reputable, apolitical scholars and organizations.

We will continue to teach and enforce a standard of conduct that aligns with the Code of a Cadet; honorable behavior will always be

paramount. Further, the primary means of promoting inclusion and belonging will continue to be achieved through learning experiences that promote effective teamwork, team cohesion, and leadership of teams.

With an appreciation for diversity and individual effort, the strength of the VMI environment is a function of the character infused within individuals who are focused on achieving a common set of outcomes and results.



## 2. Provide a supportive work environment that enhances employees' well-being through effective recruitment, onboarding, development, engagement, and compensation.

Our employees help to make cadets' educational experiences rewarding and special. Their dedication and devotion to VMI's mission is unparalleled. We want to make VMI among the best colleges to work for by improving the employee experience, beginning to end. Specifically, in the

execution of this plan, we will first implement a new onboarding and mentoring system that expedites acclimation and productivity. Second, rethink how we manage and fund professional development, and third, develop new, innovative compensation models. Additionally, because

cadets and faculty alike benefit from faculty exchanges with other colleges and universities, as well as interaction with external research and policy groups, we will work to increase these opportunities.

## 3. Deepen VMI's connection with alumni, donors, and parents.

During their tenure at VMI, cadets develop special bonds with others that can last a lifetime. Most of these bonds are with fellow cadets, while others are with faculty, staff, or local community members. These strong relationships continue to impact the Institute long after graduation, such as through donations, support for athletes, or other service. Without the generosity of alumni, VMI's ability to offer an outstanding educational experience is not possible. Given

our need for, and appreciation of, alumni support, we will strengthen these bonds even further by creating new opportunities for connection, leadership development, and mentoring. We will also work to increase donor engagement in new ways that support cadet success and their leadership development. A vibrant and competitive NCAA Athletics program plays an important role in accomplishing this goal.

Lastly, we will broaden VMI's value to the broader external community by enhancing strategic communications and marketing efforts in ways that help us communicate our uniqueness, continually make the VMI brand recognizably valuable to important leaders in state and federal agencies, and attract talented cadets, faculty, staff, and prominent organizations interested in our hiring graduates.

## 4. Provide experiential learning opportunities that will help cadets fully integrate within the VMI system, achieve their highest potential, and be productive members of a high performing Corps of Cadets.

We respect and embrace the spectrum of religious, racial, ethnic, gender, political, and viewpoint diversity that cadets bring with them, and acknowledge that a key strength of the Corps of Cadets is its diversity. Although we cannot guarantee cadets' success, we can ensure our support structures help them learn and refine the skills they will need to achieve their personal best—while at VMI and as graduates. Without exception, cadets must be willing to commit to the VMI system, work diligently toward their goals, and meet required standards. That is, cadets must earn their place within the Corps. In return, we have a responsibility to ensure the VMI system is conducive to healthy development and growth, and that every cadet, regardless background, can be a contributing member throughout the echelons of the Corps.

To that end, we will offer world-class, research-based training and learning

experiences that promote growth, enhance belonging, and equip cadets with the skills needed to successfully build and lead strong teams. Exposure to diverse perspectives will challenge cadets to think critically and work collaboratively across differences. They will also learn to work together effectively, build

strong relationships, and hone their leadership and communication skills. By fostering a sense of belonging and acceptance, while also embracing differences and unique perspectives, VMI will continue to produce culturally competent leaders who can manage diverse teams and make a positive impact on society.



## Initiative

### Recruit Top Cadets and Boost Success

*"VMI gave me friends and brothers—cast by special circumstances of struggle and triumph, by victories and defeats, by hearty laughter and tears, which relieve and release, are joined not by mere genes but by bonds, fired in the Institute's great forge. They stand the test, treasures and traumas of time—forever!"—Dr. Mac Bowman '73, award-winning cardiologist.*

## Goal

**Recruit and retain talented cadets who embody VMI's core values of honor, courage, and excellence.**

The competition for top high school graduates is fierce. We need to find those future cadets who exemplify courageous ambition. We must strive to ensure our valued method of education remains affordable and relevant. To do so, cadet recruitment and retention efforts need to be coordinated, intentional, and cutting edge.

### 1. Adopt and integrate a strategic enrollment management model that integrates admissions, financial aid, marketing, and cadet support into one unit.

Our enrollment operations will be improved by organizing into a strategic enrollment management framework. Our goal is to create one that serves as an interconnected set of functions supporting both recruitment and retention. First, we will hire staff and leadership committed to this effort. Second, we will organize these functions (admissions, financial aid, marketing, and support) into an integrated set of units. Third, we will

prioritize innovative recruitment of potential cadets and cadet-athletes (who traditionally constitute more than one-third of the incoming class). Finally, we must leverage data analytics and technology in new ways to optimize these operations and assess their impact. These four actions will be the first in a series of steps to update our approach and regain a competitive advantage in these areas.





## 2. Be among the top five Virginia public institutions in retention and graduation rates.

VMI is physically and mentally demanding in ways that most institutions are not. Nonetheless, VMI has very respectable retention and graduation rates. Our most recent six-year graduation rate is 77%, which is 15-points above the national average (NSC, 2016 cohort). Among Virginia four-year public institutions, VMI's graduation rate is five points higher than the average. However, our most recent retention rate was 82%, which is 9<sup>th</sup> place among Virginia public colleges and universities, 15-points below the front-runner.

To become a top 5 Virginia school, we must improve our retention rate without decreasing academic and physical rigor. There are four strategies that will help us meet this challenge. First, we must adopt a data- and technology-intensive approach to academic advising and support. Second, we must augment advising and support by rethinking our approach to classroom engagement, especially in core curriculum courses. Third, we must address growing high school deficiencies in core knowledge areas—such as mathematics,

writing, and history—before cadets matriculate because failing a core curriculum class increases the likelihood of attrition.

Fourth, we must be exceptional in our fund raising and operational excellence efforts, with particular emphasis on controlling the costs of education.

Together, these four efforts will benefit the entire VMI community: cadets, parents/guardians, faculty, and alumni.

## 3. Provide quality support services to the Corps of Cadets.

We provide an educational experience that tests and improves cadets' capacity for perseverance and resilience in ways that prepare them to support and defend the nation in times of peril. It is not a sink-or-swim

approach, however. Cadets must have access to the best support services available. Ensuring access to top notch support demonstrates our commitment to cadets' success in each component of the three-legged

stool: academics, military, and athletics. We will build out our cadet health and wellness services, with a focus on ways that best support our unique educational experience.

## Initiative

# Delivering 21<sup>st</sup> Century Infrastructure

**“There is no doubt that the quality of post facilities directly impacts the success of cadets, faculty, and staff in their daily routines. Plans for new facilities and renovations focus on serving cadets for generations.”—Brig. Gen. Dallas Clark '99, Deputy Superintendent for Finance and Support.**

## Goal

**Invest in facility maintenance, operations, physical plant, and auxiliary facilities to advance VMI's academic, military, and athletics priorities.**

VMI is no ordinary college. As such, it requires more than ordinary facilities. VMI operates and maintains many facilities that other institutions of higher education do not. Many facilities have been built or renovated within the past decade, but others need repair, modernization, or replacement. Providing continuously updated facilities and infrastructure is an important component of Forging 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leaders.

### **1. Strengthen and enhance overall sustainment, restoration, and modernization of facilities to support 21<sup>st</sup> century requirements.**

Facilities will be operated to maximize useful life incorporating safety, security, efficiency, and sustainability. Planning and modernization will be undertaken to incorporate evolving programmatic requirements for

classrooms, physical training, and NCAA athletics, which can enhance the appeal to Institute scholars and athletes (who want to learn and compete in modern and attractive arenas of competition).



Cadets' needs were top of mind throughout the entire process of the \$43 million Scott Shipp Hall updates. The five-year project included a 28,000-square foot expansion and a complete renovation of the previously existing 68,000-square foot space. In addition to being the home to multiple departments' classrooms and offices, including history; economics and business; international studies; and English, rhetoric and humanistic studies, the building has a photography lab, an art studio, a 70-seat auditorium, and courtyards for outdoor study. Other open spaces allow for group meetings and easy access to professor offices. It also holds a 3,600-square foot space for the John A. Adams '71 Center for Military History and Strategic Analysis.

## 2. Advance capital investment.

Advancing capital investment into facilities will include close collaboration with gubernatorial, legislative,

and alumni stakeholders. Investment in facilities in support of Forging 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leaders will require

investment of both private and public funding into facilities.

## 3. Modernize and enhance post-wide safety and security.

Because cadet and employee safety is a top priority, modernization and enhancement of the post-wide safety system is critical. Barracks safety plans include replacement of exterior doors and hardware, replacement of windows and frames, an upgraded camera system, and updates to the technology within barracks. There will also be gates and barricades that can be deployed as needed to shut down post in the event of an emergency or to provide additional safety during cadet training.



# A Foundation Forged



- » Best College Nationally, ranked by value: **No. 5** (2022)
- » Best Public School Nationally: **No. 6** (2022)
- » Best Small College Nationally: **No. 3** (2020 most recent ranking)—*Money magazine*



Georgetown University study ranks VMI **No. 1 for Return on Investment** among public liberal arts colleges nationwide. (2021)



National Colleges and Universities: No. 158, among top 20% (out of 801) **U.S. News and World Report** ranked VMI in the top four public liberal arts college in the nation for the 18<sup>th</sup> year, behind only the nation's federal service academies.

- » **No. 4 in National Public Liberal Arts Colleges**
- » No. 70 in National Liberal Arts Colleges
- » No. 21 in Best Undergraduate Engineering Programs (where doctorate is not offered)



VMI meets 100% of the financial need for Virginia cadets and aims to meet a significant portion of the need for out-of-state cadets



Payscale.com estimates VMI graduates earn \$70,000 per year on average during their early years after graduation and \$129,000 per year mid-career



**97%**

of VMI cadets are employed or in graduate school within six months of graduation



7 VMI graduates have earned the Medal of Honor, the U.S. military's highest award  
11 VMI graduates are Rhodes Scholars  
1 Nobel Peace Prize laureate

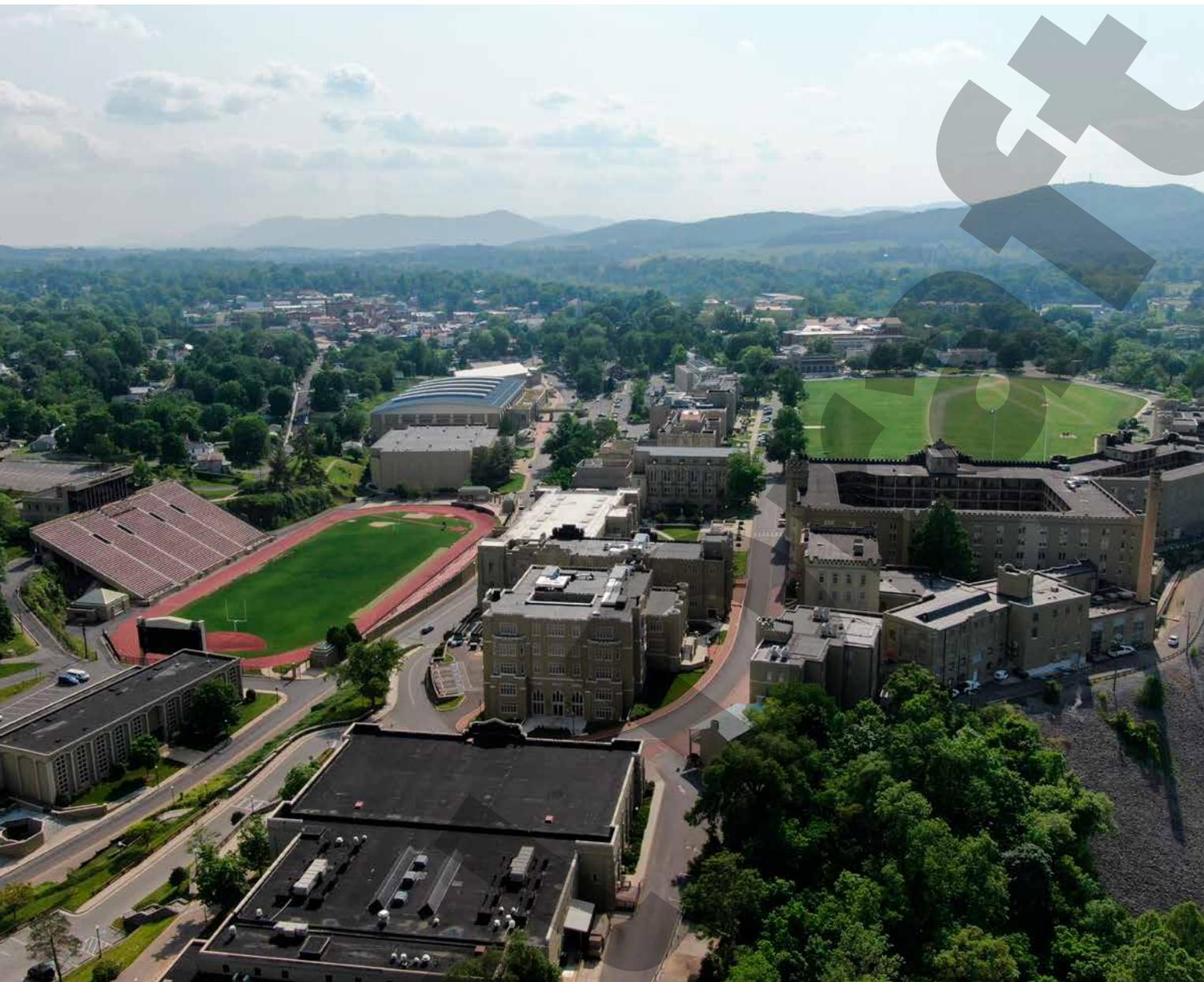


**Wall Street Journal/Times Higher Ed. Ranking** (2022)

- » Best Value: **No. 5**
- » Strengthen Academic Excellence

**“Earning a degree from the Virginia Military Institute is an experience like no other. On a daily basis, our cadets choose a path that challenges them academically, physically, and mentally. Forging 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leaders strengthens the VMI experience and ensures a future of great leaders for our nation and commonwealth.”—Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85, Superintendent.**

—BOV



## Connect with VMI

-  [facebook.com/vmi1839](https://facebook.com/vmi1839)
-  [@virginiamilitaryinstitute](https://instagram.com/@virginiamilitaryinstitute)
-  [@vmi1839](https://twitter.com/@vmi1839)
-  [vminews.tumblr.com](https://vminews.tumblr.com)
-  [linkedin.com/school/virginia-military-institute](https://linkedin.com/school/virginia-military-institute)

For the most accurate information and event updates, please visit [www.vmi.edu](http://www.vmi.edu).

Additional photos and videos can be found on Flickr and YouTube.



The Virginia Military Institute is committed to providing an environment that emphasizes the dignity and worth of every member of its community and that is free from harassment and discrimination based on race, sex, color, national origin, religion, age, veteran status, sexual orientation, pregnancy, genetic information, against otherwise qualified persons with disabilities, or based on any other status protected by law. In pursuit of this goal, any question of impermissible discrimination on these bases will be addressed with efficiency and energy and in accordance with VMI General Order 16. General Order 90 addresses complaints or reports of retaliation against those who have opposed practices prohibited by General Order 16, those who have filed complaints or reports of prohibited practices, and those who have testified or otherwise participated in enforcement of General Order 16. Questions regarding discrimination prohibited by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, or other federal law, may be referred to the VMI Inspector General and Title IX Coordinator, 303 Letcher Avenue, VMI, Lexington, VA 24450, 540-464-7012. Any cadet or prospective cadet having questions about disability services for students should contact the Miller Academic Center, 206 Carroll Hall, Lexington, VA 24450, 540-464-7636. For employment-related disability services, contact the Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator in the VMI Human Resources Office, Lexington, VA 24450, 540-464-7322.

Bill Wyatt - 2023/12/12 19:50 UTC  
Virginia Military Institute



# Strategic Plan Approval Brief

Board of Visitors  
30 November 2023

**Maj. Gen. Cedric Wins '85**  
U.S. Army (retired)  
Superintendent



## ***Strategic Plan Overview***



## ***Forging 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leaders*** **Five Strategic Initiatives**



## ***Substantive Edits to the Strategic Plan***



**Suggestion:** *Emphasize controlling costs and operational excellence/efficiency.*

Location: Superintendent's Letter (Pg. 2)

Before

*In the ever-changing landscape of higher education, we are determined for VMI to be the premier small liberal arts college and operate fully as a leadership laboratory for young men and women. In this pursuit, we must not miss the opportunity to leverage academic advancements to continue to prepare our graduates for the day after graduation. While we have accomplished much in recent decades, we must move forward along a path that continues to be forged.*

Location: Superintendent's Letter (Pg. 2)

After

*Although we have accomplished much over the decades, we must continue forging a path forward. In the ever-changing landscape of higher education, we are determined for VMI to be the premier small liberal arts college and to operate fully as a leadership laboratory for young men and women. Forging 21st Century Leaders is intended to help us realize this vision by leveraging academic advancements through which we can achieve operational excellence while being ever vigilant about year over year affordability for VMI families. Done successfully, the VMI diploma will be strengthened and enhanced, ensuring the honorable graduates we produce enter the workforce prepared to succeed and ready to overcome the formidable challenges of the coming decades.*



**Suggestion:** *Emphasize controlling costs and operational excellence/efficiency.*

Location: Recruit Top Cadets & Boost Success, Objective 2 (Pg. 15)

*2. Be among the top five Virginia public institutions in retention and graduation rates.*

*VMI is physically and mentally demanding in ways that most institutions are not. Nonetheless, VMI has very respectable retention and graduation rates. Our most recent six-year graduation rate VMI is 77%, which is 15-points above the national average (NSC, 2016 cohort). Among Virginia four-year public institutions, VMI's graduation rate is five points higher than the average. However, our most recent retention rate was 82%, which is 9th place among Virginia public colleges and universities, 15-points below the front-runner.*

*To become a top 5 Virginia school, we must improve our retention rate without decreasing academic and physical rigor. There are ~~three~~ four strategies that will help us meet this challenge. First, we must adopt a data- and technology-intensive approach to academic advising and support. Second, we must augment advising and support by rethinking our approach to classroom engagement, especially in core curriculum courses.*

*Third, we must address growing high school deficiencies in core knowledge areas—such as mathematics, writing, and history—before cadets matriculate because failing a core curriculum class increases the likelihood of attrition.*

*Fourth, we must be exceptional in our fund raising and operational excellence efforts, with particular emphasis on controlling the costs of education.*

*Together, these four efforts will benefit the entire VMI community: cadets, parents/guardians, faculty, and alumni.*



**Suggestion:** *Illuminate what VMI will look like in 2039; emphasize the fundamental elements of the VMI experience.*

Location: The Vision Guiding the Process (Pg. 4)

Before

*The guiding tenets of the Forging 21st Century Leaders planning process included:*

- » *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.*
- » *Develop and graduate honorable men and women who serve with courage and compassion.*

Location: The Vision Guiding the Process (Pg. 4)

After

*As we work toward our 2039 bicentennial, we envision a VMI that will:*

- » *Grow and retain a Corps strength at operational capacity.*
- » *Be a first-choice destination for talented students, faculty, and staff,*
- » *Retain and graduate cadets at rates that rival the best institutions in the nation,*
- » *Have 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, and*
- » *Develop and graduate honorable men and women who serve with courage and compassion, with at least 75% serving their country in some capacity—especially within the US Armed Forces or other state and federal agencies—a goal of more than half commissioning in the US Armed Forces, and additional quarter serving in other public service roles.*

*In the implementation of this plan, we are committed to achieving the Institute's mission by protecting our time-honored culture and traditions and maintaining the elements fundamental to the VMI experience, namely:*

- A single-sanction honor system that reinforces integrity and is fair,*
- A Class System that promotes accountability and camaraderie,*
- A Regimental System that promotes leader development,*
- A rigorous academic curriculum that challenges cadets to think critically and encourages ethical reasoning, and*
- A commitment to preparing graduates for a life of service the nation and the Commonwealth of Virginia.*

**Suggestion:** Discuss how we accomplish the values of Honor and Resilience; improve the language used to describe Excellence.



Location: Values (Pg. 5)

### Honor

Honor is the heart and bedrock of the VMI experience. The VMI Honor Code has been fundamental since the school's beginning in 1839. "A cadet will not lie, cheat, steal, nor tolerate those who do." VMI's unique, single-sanction Honor System is foundational to the culture of the Institute. Living the Honor Code establishes the framework for an honor- able life.

Beyond our code, VMI seeks to develop men and women who live lives of integrity. Choosing to do the right thing even when there's an easier path, and treating others with dignity and respect, should be hallmarks of a VMI graduate. These are foundational to the VMI mission of producing "honorable men and women prepared for the varied work of civil life..."

[Kept the above and added the following at the end of the section]

The VMI Honor System's strength is the expectation of adherence to the highest standards of ethical behavior offering no tolerance for aberrations. More than a set of rules and regulations, the objective of the honor code is the inculcation of honor as a lifestyle. The development of honor is accomplished through conscientious daily decisions undertaken by each individual cadet in all facets of their lives.

Location: Values (Pg. 5)

### Excellence

*VMI has a long history of excellence. The VMI experience is predicated on pushing cadets to be the best version of themselves, reaching targets and goals that stretch themselves to new limits.*

*Seven Medal of Honor recipients. 11 Rhodes Scholars. 1 Nobel Peace Prize winner. 1 Pulitzer Prize winner. 293 general and flag officers.*

*Pursuing excellence is the standard at VMI, not just in the classroom, but in every aspect of a cadet's life: academics, military, extra-curricular, and athletics. It is a hallmark of a VMI graduate.*

[Kept the above, edited the middle paragraph]

*VMI graduates' noteworthy accomplishments are exemplified through Seven Medal of Honor recipients, 11 Rhodes Scholars, 1 Nobel Peace Prize winner, 1 Pulitzer Prize winner, 293 general and flag officers, 2 Virginia Governors, numerous state and federal legislators, and many business executives in the fields of science, defense, security, engineering, and manufacturing. Leaders from VMI emerge irrespective of their chosen path.*

Location: Values (Pg. 6)

### Resilience

Mental toughness inspires cadet life. They get tired, get knocked down, and take some tough hits, but it's how they react and recover that makes them special. It takes a level of grit just to apply to VMI. Then starting as early as Matriculation Day, a cadet's resilience is tested regularly. There is no shame in asking for or receiving help, and help is readily available.

Cadets face challenges each day on the field of competition, in the classroom, and as they prepare for the battlefield and the boardroom. There's no fear in failure, but rather a motivation for doing better the next time.

[Kept the above and added the following at the end of the section]

Resilient leaders at VMI are developed through the constant pressure to prioritize requirements and strive for excellence in response to the rigorous demands of a cadetship.



**Suggestion:** Add an action quote.

Location: The Plan (Pg. 7, side bar)

*“VMI graduates are making a difference in the lives of their soldiers, co-workers, and families. To continue to deliver on our mission, the VMI experience must refine, enhance, and adapt to meet the ever-changing needs of our communities, commonwealth, and nation.”—Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85, Superintendent*



**Suggestion:** Blend NCAA Athletics with other leader development opportunities; streamline description of products.

Location: Prepare Exceptional Leaders, Objective 1 (Pg. 8)

1. Teach, coach, mentor, guide, and direct cadets through the VMI training model to help them develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to become effective leaders.

*Our country needs leaders of character now more than ever. VMI serves this need by developing men and women who think and act ethically, lead by example, inspire confidence, and are willing to work hard to achieve their goals. They endure rigorous training that promotes resilience and perseverance. Opportunities for cadets to hone their leadership skills are many and varied. Examples include participation in club sports, extracurricular activities, academic clubs and honor societies, Center for Leadership and Ethics programs, and the Regimental and Class Systems. Similarly, through NCAA athletics, leadership opportunities abound on the field of competition where individual and team skills are demonstrated.*

*Our unique method of education, symbolized by a three-legged stool (academics, military, athletics), has produced Rhodes Scholars, numerous military leaders, and captains of industry, ~~and a civil rights martyr~~. We intend to continue this great tradition and find ways to improve upon it. We strive to elevate VMI's approach to leader development to world-renowned status.*



**Suggestion:** *Revise graduate school reference.*

Location: Prepare Exceptional Leaders, Objective 5 (Pg. 9)

5. Explore the value-added opportunity of ~~offering graduate programs and professional or advanced certificates~~ expanding the Institute's exceptional leadership training model and reputation in new and innovative ways.

We have an exceptional leadership development model that prepares leaders for all walks of life. Questions about whether this model should be expanded to a broader group of aspiring leaders, and if so, how would its design and implementation best align with and strengthen our mission. Thus, we need to determine if expansion into ~~new areas of educational programming~~ areas like undergraduate research and micro credentials makes sense, and if so, how, exactly, it should be undertaken. ~~they would be delivered, and what students and location would be best suited for these new programs.~~

Additionally, leveraging existing initiatives, such as the Peay Endowment, provides unexplored opportunities to attract VMI graduates as faculty. Offering a continuing education or graduate program may be a catalyst to achieve this end more expeditiously. Maintaining and preserving the Institute's mission, culture, and traditions will be top priorities in this value-added exploration.



***Suggestion: Emphasize diverse people coming together as a strength.***

Location: Foster Esprit de Corps, Objective 1 (Pg. 12)

1. Advance efforts that foster a safe, diverse, and inclusive environment.

We strive to make VMI safer, more diverse, and inclusive. We will work to advance these efforts in ways that are appropriate for our mission and that resonate with the VMI community. To do so, we will focus efforts on system-level policies and procedures and the use of science-based practices and programming recommended by reputable, apolitical scholars and organizations.

We will continue to teach and enforce a standard of conduct that aligns with the Code of a Cadet; ~~personal~~ honorable behavior will always be paramount. Further, the primary means of promoting inclusion and belonging will continue to be achieved through learning experiences that promote effective teamwork, team cohesion, and leadership of teams.

With an appreciation for diversity and individual effort, the strength of the VMI environment is a function of the character infused within individuals who are focused on achieving a common set of outcomes and results.



***Suggestion: Discuss enhancement of communications and marketing.***

Location: Foster Esprit de Corps, Objective 3 (Pg. 13)

3. Deepen VMI's connection with alumni, donors, and parents.

During their tenure at VMI, cadets develop special bonds with others that can last a lifetime. Most of these bonds are with fellow cadets, while others are with faculty, staff, or local community members. These strong relationships continue to impact the Institute long after graduation, such as through donations, support for athletes, or other service. Without the generosity of alumni, VMI's ability to offer an outstanding educational experience is not possible. Given our need for, and appreciation of, alumni support, we will strengthen these bonds even further by creating new opportunities for connection, leadership development, and mentoring.

We will also work to increase donor engagement in new ways that support cadet success and their leadership development. A vibrant and competitive NCAA Athletics program plays an important role in accomplishing this goal.

[Kept the above and added the following at the end of the section]

Lastly, we will broaden VMI's value to the broader external community by enhancing strategic communications and marketing efforts in ways that help us communicate our uniqueness, continually make the VMI brand recognizably valuable to important leaders in state and federal agencies, and attract talented cadets, faculty, staff, and prominent organizations interested in hiring our graduates.



***Suggestion: Focus on teams and team building rather than individuals.***

Location: Foster Esprit de Corps, Objective 4 (Pg. 13)

4. Provide experiential learning opportunities that will help cadets fully integrate within the VMI system, ~~and~~ achieve their highest potential, ~~and be productive members of a high performing Corps of Cadets.~~

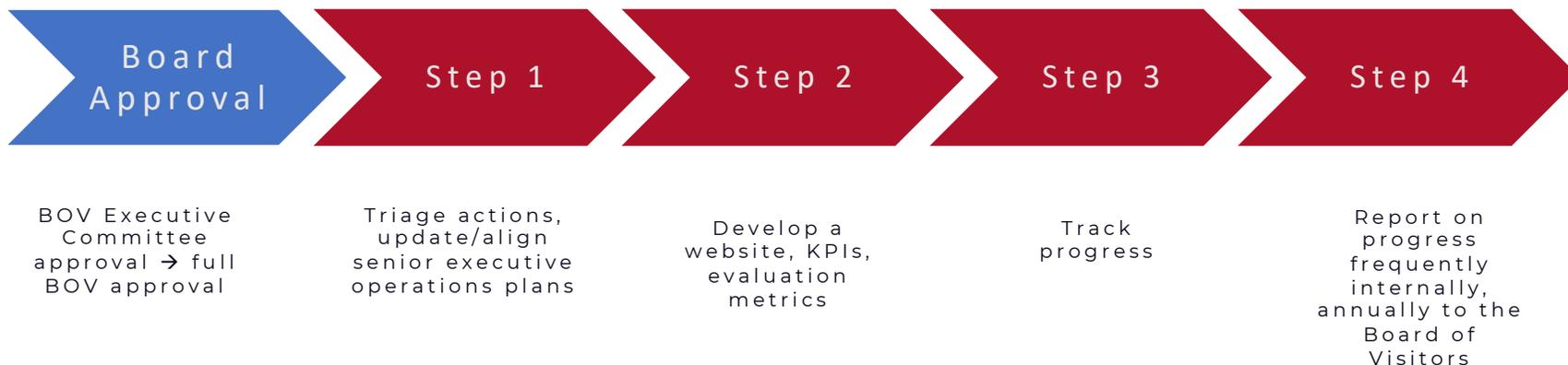
We respect and embrace the spectrum of religious, racial, ethnic, gender, political, and viewpoint diversity that cadets bring with them, and acknowledge that a key strength of the Corps of Cadets is its diversity.

Although we cannot guarantee cadets' success, we can ensure that our support structures help them learn and refine the skills that they will need to achieve their personal best – while at VMI and as graduates. Without exception, cadets must be willing to commit to the VMI system, work diligently toward their goals, and meet required standards. That is, cadets must earn ~~success their place within the Corps. Reciprocally~~. ~~In return~~, we have a responsibility to ensure that the VMI system is conducive to healthy development and growth, and that every cadet, regardless of ~~race, ethnicity, gender, or nationality, can thrive within its confines.~~ ~~background, can be a contributing member throughout the echelons of the Corps.~~

To that end, we will offer world-class, research-based training and learning experiences that promote growth, enhance belonging, and equip cadets with the skills needed to successfully ~~interact with diverse groups.~~ ~~build and lead strong teams.~~ Exposure to diverse perspectives will challenge cadets to think critically and work collaboratively across differences. They will also learn to work together effectively, build strong relationships, and hone their leadership and communication skills. By fostering a sense of belonging and acceptance, while also embracing differences and unique perspectives, VMI will continue to produce culturally competent leaders who can manage diverse teams and make a positive impact on society.



## Next Steps





# ***Recommendation: Approval***

**Questions?**

# APPENDIX II

# Board of Visitors

Athletic Budget Update

30 November 2023

Bill Wyatt - 2023/12/12 19:50 UTC  
Virginia Military Institute



“Cadet participation in organized athletic activity has been a hallmark of the Virginia Military Institute since its earliest years.

As for the legendary VMI Spirit, the importance of athletics in its origin and continuation has been acknowledged by cadets and alumni for nearly a century.

As stated in the 1928 Bomb: “Too many words of praise cannot be showered on our athletes. They are responsible for the larger part of the perpetuation of the ‘Spirit of VMI’”

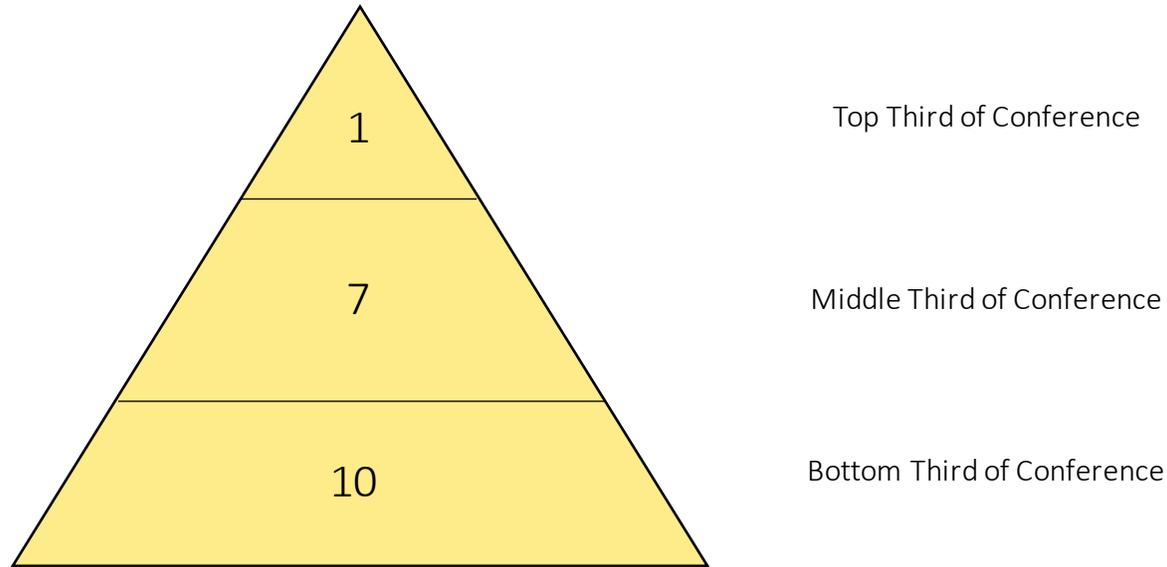


# VMI Athletics

- Our athletics budgeting and private fund raising must support a strategy of Competing to Win, not merely “making do with what we have”.
- Athletics at VMI is not just a “cost center”. A Division I athletics program brings significant value to the Institute.
- Regarding operating budgets, VMI remains approximately 5 million dollars behind the average of its Southern Conference competitors.



# Seven Year Conference Performance



There is a direct relationship between the degree of competitiveness and the funding of an intercollegiate athletic program. Historically, VMI has funded its intercollegiate athletic budget at a level significantly less than the average budget of its conference peers. Therefore, VMI is at a competitive disadvantage.



# Current Athletic Budget

Without taking steps to increase revenues or reduce costs, the athletic budget is currently projected to run a deficit of ~\$1.2 million.

## How did we get here?

- Employee Compensation Changes ~\$900,000 (over three years)
  - Reduced Enrollment ~\$750,000 (over two years)
  - Indirect Cost Increase ~\$300,000 (one year)

Note: use of the athletic fund balance will reduce the deficit to ~\$300,000 in FY24



# Strategies to Address Athletic Budget

- Athletic Department Cost Cutting and Revenue Increases (Examples)
  - Increase football and basketball annual ticket revenues
  - Increase guarantee game revenues and reduce competition costs
  - Prioritize and manage team operating costs
- Corporate Sales/Advertising (Multi-Media Rights)
- Indirect Costs
  - VMI is reviewing its calculation of indirect costs



# Strategies to Address Athletic Budget

- **Athletic Fee Increase**
  - Explore the potential of an athletic fee increase
- **Superintendent's Discretionary Account**
  - Increase contributions made from the Superintendent's Discretionary Fund
  - Evaluate possibility of one-time supplement from the Auxiliary Fund Balance to offset temporary lower enrollment levels
- **Revised Fundraising Model**
  - Keydet Club and Athletics need to work together to develop new strategies to raise operating funds
- **Athletics Budget Review**
  - Establish a quarterly budget execution brief on athletics in alignment with VMI Operational Budget quarterly budget execution briefing



# Summary

- Athletics is a vital aspect of the VMI culture
- Athletics budgeting and private fund raising must support a strategy of Competing to Win, not merely “making do with what we have”
- There is a direct relationship between the degree of competitiveness and the funding of an intercollegiate athletic program
- There are numerous financial items outside of athletic department control that have caused the current budget situation
- Seven strategies have been laid out in order to address the athletic budget moving forward
  - Internal Cost Cutting
  - Multi-Media Rights
  - Indirect Cost Evaluation
  - Athletic Fee Increase
  - Superintendent’s Discretionary Account
  - Revised Fundraising Model
  - Athletics Budget Review





Bill Wyatt - 2023/12/12 19:50 UTC  
Virginia Military Institute

# APPENDIX III

Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at 15:34:56 Eastern Standard Time

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**Subject:** Re: Certification of Closed Session  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at 3:29:15 PM Eastern Standard Time  
**From:** Adams, John D.  
**To:** Wyatt, William J, Jr., 'Bill'  
**Attachments:** image001.png

I certify.

**John Adams**  
McGuireWoods LLP

On Dec 12, 2023, at 2:57 PM, Wyatt, William J, Jr., 'Bill' <[wyattwj@vmi.edu](mailto:wyattwj@vmi.edu)> wrote:

**\*\*EXTERNAL EMAIL; use caution with links and attachments\*\***

John:

Do you certify the following statement as it applies to the time you were present during the closed session?

“During its closed meeting on Thurs., Nov. 30, 2023, the VMI Board of Visitors discussed only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, and only those public business matters identified in the motion convening the board in closed session.”

<image001.png> **Bill Wyatt**  
Colonel, Virginia Militia  
Director of Communications & Marketing  
FOIA Officer  
**Virginia Military Institute**  
110 Smith Hall, Lexington, Virginia 24450-0304  
540-464-7170 Office  
[wyattwj@vmi.edu](mailto:wyattwj@vmi.edu) [vmi.edu](http://vmi.edu)

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Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at 15:45:18 Eastern Standard Time

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**Subject:** RE: Certification of Closed Session  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at 3:42:04 PM Eastern Standard Time  
**From:** Edgar, C Ernest  
**To:** Wyatt, William J, Jr., 'Bill'  
**Attachments:** image001.png  
Thanks, Bill, I so certify. Best regards,

Ernie

## Ernie Edgar

General Counsel  
AtkinsRealis Americas Region

### AtkinsRéalis

(813) 281-3626, (813) 340-6606, [LinkedIn](#)

4030 W. Boy Scout Boulevard, Suite 700

Tampa, FL, 33607, United States

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**From:** Wyatt, William J, Jr., 'Bill' <[wyattwj@vmi.edu](mailto:wyattwj@vmi.edu)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 12, 2023 3:31 PM  
**To:** Edgar, C Ernest <[Ernie.Edgar@atkinsrealis.com](mailto:Ernie.Edgar@atkinsrealis.com)>  
**Subject:** Certification of Closed Session

Ernie:

Do you certify the following statement as it applies to the time you were present during the closed session?

“During its closed meeting on Thurs., Nov. 30, 2023, the VMI Board of Visitors discussed only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, and only those public business matters identified in the motion convening the board in closed session.”



### Bill Wyatt

Colonel, Virginia Militia  
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Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at 15:47:44 Eastern Standard Time

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**Subject:** Re: Certification of Closed Session  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at 3:47:08 PM Eastern Standard Time  
**From:** Terry McKnight  
**To:** Wyatt, William J, Jr., 'Bill'  
**Attachments:** image001.png

I certify.

All the best, Terry

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**From:** Wyatt, William J, Jr., 'Bill' <[wyattwj@vmi.edu](mailto:wyattwj@vmi.edu)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 12, 2023 3:31:02 PM  
**To:** Terry McKnight <[temcknight@hotmail.com](mailto:temcknight@hotmail.com)>  
**Subject:** Certification of Closed Session

Sir:

Do you certify the following statement as it applies to the time you were present during the closed session?

“During its closed meeting on Thurs., Nov. 30, 2023, the VMI Board of Visitors discussed only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, and only those public business matters identified in the motion convening the board in closed session.”



**Bill Wyatt**

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