



# BOARD OF VISITORS

EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

28 APRIL 2023



**VMI Board of Visitors**  
External Relations Committee Agenda  
28 April 2023

1. Review of January 27, 2023 External Relations Committee Minutes
2. Updates from Previous Meeting
3. Reports
  - a. S5 – Cadet Public Affairs (Cadet Maggie Beckman '23)
  - b. Government Relations (Brig. Gen. Clark / Col. Parker)
    - i. McGuireWoods Consulting Report
    - ii. Budget Negotiations Update
    - iii. 2023 Higher Education Legislation Report
    - iv. Six-Year Plan Process
    - v. Local Government Relations
  - c. Communications & Marketing Report (Col. Wyatt)
    - i. C&M Update
  - d. VMI Alumni Agencies Communications Update (Ms. Goetz)
  - e. VMI Museum System Update (Col. Gibson)
4. New Business
5. Adjournment



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

Jan. 27, 2023

Present: Ms. Lara Tyler Chambers '03  
Mr. Hugh M. Fain III '80, Committee Chair  
Mr. Thomas E. Gottwald '83  
Ms. Gussie Lord, '01  
Ms. Meaghan Mobbs (virtual)  
Mr. Eugene Scott Jr. '80

Absent: None

Others: Ms. Maggie Beckman '23, S5 Captain  
Brig. Gen. Dallas Clark '99, Deputy Superintendent FAS  
Maj. Michelle Ellwood, Communications and Marketing  
Ms. Amy Goetz, Alumni Agencies  
Mr. Jeff Lawhorne, Treasurer  
Maj. Grace Moyer, Museum Systems  
Col. Bill Wyatt, Communications and Marketing

The meeting was called to order at 1608 hours in the Smith Hall boardroom by Mr. Fain.

1. Review Charter:

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

2. New Hire Update:

Col. Wyatt shared the Communications and Marketing team has hired a social media specialist to fill the vacancy, and brought on a digital content specialist and videographer, all to support the efforts of external communications for the Institute.

3. Review of the September 2022 External Relations Committee Minutes:

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

4. Reports:

***Cadet S5 Report.***

- (1) Ms. Beckman, S5 captain for the 22-23 academic year, discussed the fall semester recruiting initiatives:
  - a. The three fall Admissions Open Houses were successful for the group. The participating rats had briefings before the events.
  - b. They are working on spring open houses, as well as virtual open houses – a new concept to the group.
  - c. The New Cadet Recruiting Program has been a focus, as they are working on training and a presentation for furlough recruiting.
- (2) The S5 staff are working with the new social media specialist on collecting content, doing promotions for open houses, and cadet takeovers.
- (3) They started filming parades to help with identifying problem areas in the spacing, steps, etc. for the Corps.
- (4) Up ahead for the spring semester, the S5 staff will be supporting the Boxing Nationals, Honors Week anniversary, virtual tours for Alumni Agencies, etc.

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

- (1) Brig. Gen. Clark briefly discussed the budget, and the Governor's budget.
  - a. Budget adjustments include reviewing employee pay, financial aid, strategic enrollment process, new faculty, facility planning, etc.
- (2) The battlefield project is being reviewed for New Market, but academic priorities will come first.
- (3) The construction phase is not ready for Peay Hall, but we are in planning phase. There is a non-general fund portion to this (the parking).
- (4) Col. Kim Parker is keeping a close eye on higher education legislation being reviewed during election season.
- (5) The VMI Legislative Reception is scheduled for Feb. 16 – one of the key dates of the General Assembly. Brig. Gen. Clark emphasized the interest the legislators have in this day and in engaging with cadets.
- (6) There will be a redistricting in the commonwealth coming up. We will have new delegates. It will bring a very different legislature next session.

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

- (1) Col. Wyatt shared VMI's news items in the last quarter are up 35%; there is a full-time media relations person now constantly pushing news stories out. In addition to program and cadet highlights, faculty are being identified as experts to be available for high-profile news interviews.
- (2) 87.8% news stories are categorized as positive or neutral. VMI receives 3 positive news stories for every 1 negative.
- (3) The team is providing a lot of behind-the-scenes support for Institute happenings, like the Aquatic Center, major events, etc., including photography, videography, publications, and social media.
- (4) In social media, followers went up, but engagement was down from the last period. That is tied to the fact that the social media specialist position was vacant during that period.

- (5) In web analytics, VMI has signed up with a company to help with search engine optimization (SEO) to improve the various searches in which VMI would appear.
- (6) The website is being updated to be a web experience for prospective cadets, weeding out pages that haven't been updated for years. Apply pages and others are now much more user friendly.
- (7) For the Digital Boost campaign, it is digital advertising to push people to creative landing pages that focus on applying or the deposit page. This is also being targeted to people who are similar to those in our funnel, and geotargeting is happening in areas around military bases or high schools that we typically have a number of applications. Personalized videos and text messages are part of this campaign. Results of this will be coming later in the spring semester.

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

- (1) Maj. Moyer shared that Col. Keith Gibson has been giving a series of lectures at various places, including Kendal of Lexington. He has also participated in an interview for a documentary for Sir Moses Ezekiel.
- (2) Col. Gibson is also partnering with his counterpart at Washington and Lee University as they prepare for a new museum.
- (3) The museums have a few staff changes. A part-time employee has transitioned to now overseeing the store system for all the museums.
- (4) Cadets have remained very involved in the museums, including giving tours and assisting with preparing and researching larger exhibits.
- (5) The Jackson House Museum has an updated tour program. The self-guided tours have worked very well – they were created during the coronavirus pandemic. Their self-guided tour has set examples for other museums.
- (6) A few small snags at the museums have happened, including burst pipes at the Jackson House Museum and interstate car accidents at the New Market Museum.
- (7) Many holiday events have started up again since COVID-19, including a Halloween event called Spirits at New Market, Christmas at the Jackson House, and Christmas on the Farm.

### **5. New Business**

There was no new business brought up.

The meeting adjourned at 1729.





**Government Relations Agenda Items**  
**External Relations Committee**  
**Friday, 28 April 2023**  
**1630-1730**

1. McGuireWoods Consulting Report
2. Budget Negotiations Update
3. 2023 Higher Education Legislation Report
4. Six Year Plan Process
5. Local Government Relations

# McGuireWoods CONSULTING

## 2023 General Assembly Session Update – Legislation / Budget

### ***Legislation:***

This year's session began January 11 and finished on time February 25. As sessions go, this was not one focused heavily on higher education. Though there were a number of bills which passed that do have an impact on the colleges and universities in Virginia, specifically in the areas of student health and safety as well as workforce. Reflecting the Governor's high priority on workforce, the related bills were focused on the intersection of workforce and higher education. The most notable, and a key priority of the Administration, was HB 2195 (Byron) / SB 1470 (Ruff) which reorganized much of the state's workforce programs that are currently housed in various agencies into one consolidated agency. Though it did leave key components, such as VTOP (internship program) connected to their original agency. In this case SCHEV.

Internships generally remain a high priority of the Governor and the General Assembly. In the yet finalized budget there are additional resources proposed to support VTOP and its efforts. And Sen. Dunnivant patroned SB 1280 bill which passed that requires all public four-year institutions to adopt policies requiring that "participation in an internship or work-based learning experience be integrated into a student's degree program so as not to extend the time to complete the degree. The bill also asks State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) to convene a work group to develop recommendations for the implementation of the policy. It is worth noting that through legislation SCHEV was given a number of new or expanded duties to implement the various bills and resolutions. Appendix A includes a list of those for your information.

On April 12, the General Assembly met to consider amendments and vetoes offered by Governor Youngkin. One bill with a Governor's amendment is worth noting. [SB 1459](#) (McDougle) which prohibits any employee or agent of any public body from downloading or using TikTok or WeChat, or accessing any website developed by ByteDance Ltd. or Tencent Holdings Ltd. on any government-issued device or piece of equipment passed both the House and the Senate. And it granted an exception to the Superintendent of State Police or the chief law-enforcement officer of a county or city for law enforcement matters; the Governor's amendments, which were approved on April 12 also grant an exception to law enforcement officials of public institutions of higher education.

### **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 four amendments to the FY 2024 budget already adopted as part of the 2022-2024 budget in June 2022. These four amendments included \$359 million for K-12 enrollment updates and addressing the sales tax on food miscalculation for K-12, the deposit to the Rainy Day fund, capital outlay funds for existing projects with cost overruns, and unfunded liabilities in the Virginia Retirement System. The Governor offered four changes to the “Skinny” budget which included a technical amendment to reflect changes in revenue collections relating to the conformity of the state’s tax code with the IRS’s tax code, reallocation of ARPA funding related to Medicaid rate increases, \$15.3 million for the TANF Unemployed Parents program, and authorization for a short-term loan to construct a data facility associated with the Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility. All four of these amendments were approved during the veto session on April 12<sup>th</sup>.

In the meantime, the 15 budget conferees – 6 from the House and 9 from the Senate – continue their conversations and have not yet reached an agreement to address major unresolved items. The latest reports indicate that a budget will not be finalized and available for a vote until sometime between the June 20 primary elections and the June 30 fiscal year end. Both the House and the Senate as well as the Administration have indicated an interest in having as much information as possible – including April’s and potentially May’s revenue reports before finalizing a budget. All agree that understanding how much revenue is available to spend and the health of the Commonwealth’s economy is critical to developing a budget.

### **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 impending 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, especially the Senate.

### ***Redistricting Context:***

This June’s primaries and conventions will mark the first time that Virginians cast their ballots in state legislative districts drawn based on the new bipartisan redistricting constitutional amendment adopted in November 2020. The amendment established a bipartisan redistricting commission, comprised of state legislators and other politically appointed citizens of the Commonwealth and tasked with drafting and approving state and federal district maps.

The commission, however, failed to reach consensus on either state or federal maps, thereby punting responsibility to the Supreme Court of Virginia. The Supreme Court appointed two “special masters,” or experts in the field of redistricting, from both the Republican Party of Virginia and the Democratic Party of Virginia to redraw the maps in an “apolitical and nonpartisan manner” after a contentious period of public comment. Ultimately, the Supreme Court unanimously approved three final maps – for the State House, State Senate, and U.S. Congress – in late December 2021, thus setting the stage for the next decade of political battles in Virginia.

***New Faces:***

Notably, the new maps were drawn without consideration of incumbent residency, thereby pitting countless sitting Delegates and Senators against each other, and leaving even more seats with no incumbent whatsoever. As a result of the new dynamics, a growing number of lawmakers have chosen to not seek reelection, while others are electing to move to a neighboring district rather than face newly unfavorable political chances in their current district.

As of mid-March, about one-third of the 100 House districts and one-fourth of the 40 Senate districts are now considered “open seats,” – they have no incumbent representative. One House district and one Senate district feature an incumbent-versus-incumbent primary.

Setting aside the dramatic way redistricting will limit the number of returning lawmakers next year, many incumbents are also facing the two traditional issues of primary or convention challengers and difficult general elections. Ten sitting Senators have primary or convention challengers, while only five Delegates will have to fight to defend their party’s nomination from a non-incumbent member of their own party. While it is difficult to know exactly how many seats are truly competitive this November, several freshman legislators who displaced incumbents in 2021 will face a challenging path to reelection this November.

***New Leadership:***

Not only will the General Assembly have a likely record-breaking number of new faces next January, but leadership – particularly in the Senate – will be completely shaken up.

Delegate Kathy Byron, Republican Chair of the House Commerce and Energy Committee; Delegate Rob Bell, Republican Chair of the House Courts of Justice Committee; Delegate Glenn Davis, Republican Chair of the House Education Committee; and Delegate Margaret Ransone, Republican Chair of the House Privileges and Elections Committee are all retiring.

Delegate Emily Brewer, Republican Chair of the Communications, Technology, and Innovation Committee, is seeking a Senate seat. While Speaker Todd Gilbert and Minority Leader Don Scott are likely to continue leading the Republicans and Democrats, respectively, it is unclear which party will emerge with most seats in the House in November.

The Senate's leadership may be even more severely disrupted (See Appendix B) with the retirement of Democratic Majority Leader Dick Saslaw – who also chairs the Senate Commerce and Labor Committee – and Republican Minority Leader Tommy Norment. Senator Louise Lucas, President Pro Tempe and Democratic Chair of the Senate Education and Health Committee and the Senate Rules Committee, is facing a primary against Senator Lionell Spruill, Democratic Chair of the Senate Privileges and Elections Committee. Additionally, Senator Janet Howell, Democratic Chair of the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee; Senator John Edwards, Democratic Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee; and Senator Lynwood Lewis, Democratic Chair of the Senate Local Government Committee announced their retirements.

***A few final headlines:***

- So far are least 12 members of the Senate have announced their retirement
- Nearly a third - 31 and counting - House members have announced their retirement
- Come next January more than 70 House members will have served 4 years or less
- For the Senate nearly half will have four or less years in the body
- Of the 14 chairs of House committees, five are not seeking re-election and one is running for a state Senate seat

## APPENDIX A

### New and/or Expanded SCHEV Duties from the 2023 Legislative Session\*

<b>Duty</b>	<b>Passed or Still Potential</b>	<b>Bill/Budget Item</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Training	Passed	HB1555; SB1372	SCHEV is charged with encouraging private colleges to develop and implement policies to provide human trafficking training awareness and prevention as a part of first-year orientation programs.	Effective July 1, 2023
Best Practices – Transition of Records and Transfer of Services for Students with Disabilities	Passed	HB1659; SB830	SCHEV is not formally listed in the current language, but VDOE is charged to work with relevant stakeholders; thus, SCHEV could be asked to participate.	Effective July 1, 2023
Public Bodies – Public Access to Meetings through Electronic Communication Means	Passed	HB1738	SCHEV shall review current practices related to public access availability for meetings and ensure that electronic communication is available for the public to comment at such meetings through electronic communication.	Effective July 1, 2023
Nuclear Grant Education Fund Program	Passed	HB1779	SCHEV shall administer the grant program for the purpose of awarding grants from the Fund on a competitive basis to any public institution of higher education or private institution of higher education that seeks to establish or expand a nuclear education program.	Effective July 1, 2023
Certification Process – Immunity for Disciplinary Action	Passed	HB1870	SCHEV is charged with certifying institutions with the Department of Criminal Justice related to acts of sexual violence and immunity from disciplinary action. Previously, VMI was an exception to this policy; now SCHEV staff shall review VMI policies with the DCJ.	Effective July 1, 2023
Workforce Credential Grant Program	Passed	HB2194; SB1422	SCHEV currently manages the New Economy Workforce Credential Grant (WCG) program with VCCS. While no new duties were assigned, the cap was raised from \$3,000 to \$4,000.	Effective July 1, 2023

Department of Workforce Development and Advancement	Passed	HB2195; SB1470	SCHEV and the new Department of Workforce Development and Advancement shall jointly develop and implement strategies, and collaborate with employers and higher education institutions, to grow and expand the Innovative Internship Program, including an annual report. Further, SCHEV shall partner with the Office of Education and Labor Market Alignment to provide data and translate data to relevant partners.	Report due September 30, 2023
Standardize Core Curriculum for all RN Degrees	Passed	SB1172	SCHEV shall work with VCCS and the Board of nursing, and other stakeholders to standardize core curriculum for all RN degrees.	Report due November 1, 2023
Prioritization of School Board Funding for Dual Enrollment, Passport Program courses	Passed	SB1281	SCHEV is not charged with new duties, but SCHEV manages the Workforce Credential Grant program listed in the language. Effective data delayed to 2024.	Effective July 1, 2024
Standardize Health-Care Related Programs at Community Colleges	Passed	SB1286	SCHEV is included in a workgroup to standardize health-care related programs at community colleges.	Effective July 1, 2023
Joint Subcommittee on Higher Education	Potential	Item 1	SCHEV is charged with providing technical assistance, as required, to the joint subcommittee.	Effective July 1, 2023
Pell Initiative	Potential	Item 142	This amendment increases funding for the existing Pell Initiative program that SCHEV manages. 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 are intended to support initiatives that attract, enroll, and retain low-income students. Institutions that request funds for need-based financial aid must specify that aid may be used to support internship opportunities.	Effective July 1, 2023
Standardize Annual Financial Reporting	Potential	Item 144	SCHEV, in consultation with the Department of Accounts, shall develop a process and standardized format for institutions of higher education to report annual financial data for all state and local funds that are not recorded in the state's central financial reporting system.	Report due September 30, 2023
Pursue Statewide Vendor for Mental Health Services	Potential	Item 144	SCHEV, in consultation with the Virginia Department of Education and the Secretary of Education, shall coordinate efforts to pursue a common vendor and statewide contract, if appropriate, to provide mental health services to students at institutions of higher ed and in school divisions.	Effective July 1, 2023

Richard Bland College Independence	Potential	Item 156	SCHEV is listed in a workgroup to evaluate the creation of a regional partnership to foster improved educational attainment, alternative education delivery methods, enhanced efficiencies, and economic and community development for the region.	Report due November 1, 2023
Establish Reporting Guidelines and Approve Criteria for making Student Need-based Undergraduate Financial Aid Awards	Potential	Item 255	SCHEV shall establish reporting guidelines and approve criteria for making student awards for emergency aid.	Effective July 1, 2023

\*- from SCHEV's March agenda book.  
<https://www.schev.edu/home/showpublisheddocument/2725/638148894005070000>



## Appendix B

### Key Committee and Subcommittee Changes

#### SENATE

##### Senate Finance and Appropriations –

- ~~Howell (Co-Chair) (D)~~ - RETIRED
- Barker (Co- (D) - Tough race
- ~~Saslaw (D)~~ RETIRED
- Norment (R)- RETIRED
- Hanger (R)- RETIRED
- Lucas (D)- Primary
- ~~Newman (R)~~- RETIRED
- Ruff (R)
- ~~Vogel (R)~~ - RETIRED
- ~~Edwards (D)~~ - RETIRED
- Deeds (D) – Primary
- Locke (D)
- Petersen (D)
- Marsden (D)
- Ebbin (D)
- ~~McClellan (D)~~ – Elected to Congress

##### Higher Ed subcommittee–

- Locke (Chair) (D)
- ~~Howell (D)~~
- ~~Saslaw (D)~~
- ~~Norment (R)~~
- Ruff (R)
- ~~Edwards (D)~~

##### Capital Outlay subcommittee–

- Deeds (Chair) (D) – Primary
- ~~Norment (R)~~
- ~~Howell (D)~~
- ~~Saslaw (D)~~
- Hanger – Retired
- Locke (D)

##### Senate Education and Health –

- Lucas(Chair) (D) – Primary
- ~~Saslaw (D)~~ - Retired
- ~~Howell (D)~~- Retired
- ~~Newman (D)~~- Retired
- Locke (D)
- Barker (D) – Tough primary
- Petersen (D)
- ~~Cosgrove (R)~~ - Retired
- Dunnavant (R) – tough race
- Suetterlein (R)
- Peake (R)
- ~~Edwards (D)~~ - Retired
- Hashmi (D)
- Pillion (R)
- McPike (D)

##### Senate E&H Higher Ed Sub –

- Locke (Chair) (D)
- Petersen (D)
- ~~Cosgrove (R)~~
- Hashmi (D)
- Pillion (R)

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** The Superintendent  
The Board of Visitors

**FROM:** BG Dallas B. Clark

**DATE:** 8 February 2023

**SUBJECT:** General Assembly Budget Amendments 2022-2024

The House and Senate presented proposed budget amendments on Sunday, 5 February 2023. This is a brief overview of their proposals and the impact on VMI.

### *VMI Operating Budget*

#### *Educational and General Program:*

The House and Senate proposals both retain the previously approved new operating funding for VMI as follows:

- One Corps One VMI funding of \$4.0M in FY 2023. This amount decreases with the elimination of FY 2023 one-time funding to \$3.4M in FY 2024. The \$3.4M remains in VMI's base budget going forward.
- Affordable Access funding of \$1.8M in FY 2023 which is added to the base budget going forward.
- Continuation of previously received Affordable Access funding of \$485,200 in both years which is also part of VMI's base budget going forward.
- New base budget funding of \$217,000 in FY 2023, increasing to \$286,000 in FY 2024, for operation and maintenance of new facilities (Scott Shipp Hall addition and Aquatics Center) coming online.

Both the House and Senate proposed additional Affordable Access funding for FY 2024. The House proposes \$1,167,000 for VMI and requires that in-state tuition increase by no more than 1%. The Senate proposes \$1,010,000 but does not address any specific restrictions on tuition increases.

#### *Employee Compensation:*

Both the House and Senate proposed budgets increase the planned 5% employee salary increase effective 1 July 2023 by 2% for a total increase of 7%.

The House amendments eliminate the planned \$1,500 bonus for qualifying full-time employees scheduled for 1 December 2023, the Senate retains the bonus but reduces the amount to \$1,000.

The House and Senate both eliminated language that would have provided additional funds for an additional bonus of up to 10% for the highest performing employees.

The State provides approximately 40% of the cost for E&G and UMA employee salary increases and bonuses, and VMI must fund the remaining share along with the full costs for Auxiliary and local funded employee salary increases and bonuses.

*Employee Health Insurance:*

FY 2023 employer and employee health insurance premiums remained at FY 2022 levels as originally approved. The House and Senate proposals retain the employer health insurance premium increases in FY 2024 of 4.1%. FY 2024 employee premiums will increase an average of 3.9% depending on the plan selected.

*Unique Military Activities Program:*

State general funding for the Unique Military Activities (UMA) program remain at the previously approved levels of \$6,275,771 in FY 2023 and \$5,859,671 in FY 2024. The reduction in FY 2024 relates to one-time UMA funding for costs associated with converting to the new Army Green Service Uniform.

*Student Financial Assistance*

The House retains State funding for student financial assistance as originally approved at \$1,187,018 for FY 2023 and \$1,418,318 for FY 2024. The Senate maintains \$1,187,018 for FY 2023 and increases the previously proposed FY 2024 amount by an additional \$150,000 for a FY 2024 total of \$1,568,318.

*Equipment Trust Fund*

The House and Senate proposals maintain Equipment Trust Fund (ETF) funding at \$886,084 for both FY 2023 and FY 2024. This amount has remained constant since FY 2017.

*Capital Projects*

The Governor's budget proposal includes language to remove the demolition of the Cocke Hall Annex swimming pool from the scope of the Nichols Engineering Building laboratory expansion project. The planned addition will be constructed to the rear of the building and will not require demolition of the pool as originally planned. The House and Senate retained this language.

The House and Senate proposals retain the following previously authorized capital project funding items:

- Authorization to expend \$1.0M in non-general funds to analyze scope, determine cost, and establish timeline for the Barracks Windows replacement project.
- Authorization to expend VMI Funds of \$1.5M for the CLE Phase II Parking Structure detailed planning. This is in addition to state funded detailed planning of the CLE Phase II Leadership Facility previously authorized by the 2020 General Assembly.
- Authorization to acquire by donation 21 acres of VMI Alumni Agencies owned property adjacent to existing New Market Battlefield property in New Market, Virginia.
- Authorization to expend \$2.1M in general funds for detailed planning for the Moody Hall project.

The House did not propose any new capital funding for the Institute. The Senate proposal adds detailed planning funding for the following three projects:

- Renovate Financial Aid and Admissions Offices (\$202,400)
- Improve New Market Battlefield State Historical Park (\$2,000,000)
- Improve Hinty Hall and Facility Infrastructure (\$1,500,000)

#### *Maintenance Reserve*

The Senate proposal retains Maintenance Reserve Program funding of \$1,819,682 in FY 2023 and \$1,743,200 in FY 2024. The House proposal increases FY 2024 Maintenance Reserve funding to \$2,038,658.

#### *Next Steps*

The General Assembly will convene a conference committee to reconcile the differences in the two budget proposals. VMI cadets and staff will visit the General Assembly on 16 February followed that evening by the Legislative Reception in honor of the members of the General Assembly. The General Assembly is scheduled to adjourn on 25 February 2023 and meet for a veto session on 5 April 2023.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** External Relations Committee  
**FROM:** COL Kimberly Parker  
**SUBJECT:** 2023 Higher Education Legislation  
**DATE:** 14 April 2023

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Attached is a report on the successful legislation impacting higher education and the Institute from the 2023 General Assembly Session. Fewer bills with a direct impact on higher education were introduced this Session so the list of successful legislation is a little smaller.

One bill of note is HB 1870 patroned by Delegate Dan Helmer. This bill was introduced last year and the Government Relations team was unable to reach a satisfactory compromise with the patron so the bill died in committee. This year, the team was able to work out a compromise with Delegate Helmer that puts the issue to rest.

All successful legislation, unless it has a delayed enactment clause, becomes effective on 1 July 2023. VMI is currently working on its compliance efforts to meet the 1 July deadline.

## 2023 Successful Legislation Impacting Higher Education

Bill #	Companion Bill	Title	Patron	Issues Summary/Questions
<a href="#"><u>HB1403</u></a>		Provision of university housing at no cost to students designated as foster care students	Tata	Any public institution that operates university housing during scheduled intersessions must provide access to such housing at no cost to any student who is eligible for a grant pursuant to Section 23.1-601 of the Code of Virginia. Student must be registered as a student for the immediately following academic term and meet the definitions and conditions of the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.
<a href="#"><u>HB 1419</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>SB 1498</u></a>	Brown v. Board of Education Scholarship Program	Kory	Extends the eligibility for the Brown v. Board of Education Scholarship program.
<a href="#"><u>HB1555</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>SB1373</u></a>	Human trafficking awareness and prevention training requirement	Brewer/Sen Vogel	Requires BOV to implement policies to provide training to all first year students to learn about human trafficking during first year orientation.
<a href="#"><u>HB1738</u></a>		Virginia FOIA; state public bodies; meetings; virtual public access	Carr	Provides that all public bodies may provide access to meetings and may provide opportunity to comment through electronic communication means when public comment is customarily received.
<a href="#"><u>HB1843</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>SB1068</u></a>	Capital outlay plan	Del Knight, Sen Howell	Updates the six-year capital outlay plan for projects to be funded entirely or partially from general fund-supported resources.

## 2023 Successful Legislation Impacting Higher Education

<p><a href="#"><u>HB1870</u></a></p>		<p>Higher education; immunity from disciplinary action in certain cases involving a good faith report of sexual violence.</p>	<p>Helmer</p>	<p>Removes the VMI exemption to include in its policy, code, rules, or set of standards governing sexual violence a provision for immunity from disciplinary action for certain individuals who make good faith reports of sexual violence. The bill also requires that each public and nonprofit private institution of higher education extend such provision of disciplinary immunity to disclosures of curfew violations where such disclosure is made in conjunction with a good faith report of an act of sexual violence. Under current law, such boards are only required to include a provision for disciplinary immunity from disclosures of personal consumption of drugs or alcohol made in conjunction with a good faith report of an act of sexual violence.</p>
<p><a href="#"><u>HB 1912</u></a></p>	<p><a href="#"><u>SB1094</u></a></p>	<p>Treasury Board: powers and duties</p>	<p>Batten</p>	<p>Provides that the Treasury Board shall have the power and duty to make recommendations to the Governor on bonds, public-private partnerships, or other financing arrangements executed by private foundations for housing or other capital projects with respect to which an educational institution that is not a covered institution is obligated to provide financial or other types of support.</p>
<p><a href="#"><u>HB1916</u></a></p>	<p><a href="#"><u>SB910</u></a></p>	<p>Public higher education; threat assessment teams; powers and duties.</p>	<p>Batten</p>	<p>Requires Threat Assessment Teams (TAT) to undertake multiple actions within 24 hours after preliminary determination that an individual poses a threat. Requires institutions, consistent with state and federal law, to notify a transfer institution if a student or employee, who was determined by the TAT to pose a threat, transfers. Requires state to develop TAT best practices and model</p>

## 2023 Successful Legislation Impacting Higher Education

<a href="#"><u>HB2007</u></a>		Virginia Freedom of Information Act; posting of fee policy.	Roem	Requires a public body to make available upon request and post on its website or otherwise publish a written policy (i) explaining how the public body assesses charges for accessing or searching for requested records and (ii) noting the current fee charged, if any, by the public body for accessing and searching for the requested records.
<a href="#"><u>HB 2450</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>SB1491</u></a>	VPPA: construction management, contract requirements	J. Campbell	Excludes construction management projects involving infrastructure from the requirement that no more than 10 percent of the work can be self-performed by the construction manager.
<a href="#"><u>SB910</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>HB1916</u></a>	Public institutions of higher education; threat assessment teams; powers and duties	Newman	Requires Threat Assessment Teams (TAT) to undertake multiple actions within 24 hours after preliminary determination that an individual poses a threat. Requires institution, consistent with state and federal law, to notify a transfer institution if a student or employee, who was determined by the TAT to pose a threat transfers. Requires state to develop TAT best practices and model policies.
<a href="#"><u>SB1044</u></a>		Public higher education: student identification cards	McPike	Any school that provides student ID cards must include the telephone number for the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline on new cards.
<a href="#"><u>SB1094</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>HB1912</u></a>	Treasury Board: powers and duties	Norment	Provides that the Treasury Board shall have the power and duty to make recommendations to the Governor on bonds, public-private partnerships, or other financing arrangements executed by private foundations for housing or other capital projects with respect to which an educational institution that is not a covered institution is obligated to provide financial or other types of support.



## 2023 Successful Legislation Impacting Higher Education

<a href="#"><u>SB1280</u></a>		Public higher education: course credit earned through internships required; policies.	Dunnavant	Directs the governing board of each public institution of higher education to develop and implement policies requiring an internship or work-based learning experience be embedded in degree programs so as not to extend the time to degree. An enactment clause exists that could act to void the requirement if a work group does not find the requirement feasible for each institution of higher education.
<a href="#"><u>SB1313</u></a>		Construction contracts; payment clauses to be included in certain contracts; right to payment of subcontractors.	J. Bell	Clarifies certain definitions throughout the Code for consistency between public and private construction contracts. The bill updates the notice required when a general contractor withholds all or a part of the amount invoiced by a subcontractor in a public construction contract and when an owner withholds payment from a general contractor to include language specifically identifying the contractual noncompliance, the dollar amount being withheld, and the lower-tier subcontractor responsible for the contractual noncompliance.
<a href="#"><u>SB1459</u></a>		Administration of state government; prohibited applications and websites.	McDougle	Prohibits any employee or agent of any public body or person or entity contracting with any such public body from downloading or using any application, including TikTok or WeChat, or accessing any website developed by ByteDance Ltd. or Tencent Holdings Ltd. (i) on any government-issued device or government-owned or government-leased equipment, including mobile phones, desktop computers, laptop computers, tablets, or other devices capable of connecting to the Internet, or (ii) while connected to any wired or wireless Internet network owned, operated, or maintained by the Commonwealth.
<a href="#"><u>SB 1491</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>HB2450</u></a>	VPPA: construction management, contract requirements	J. Bell	Excludes construction management projects involving infrastructure projects from the requirement that no more than 10 percent of the work can be self-performed by the construction manager.

## 2023 Successful Legislation Impacting Higher Education

<a href="#">SB 1498</a>	<a href="#">HB 1419</a>	Brown v. Board of Education Scholarship Program	McClellan	Extends the eligibility for the Brown v. Board of Education Scholarship program.
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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** External Relations Committee

**FROM:** COL Kimberly Parker

**SUBJECT:** SCHEV Institutional Six Year Plan

**DATE:** 14 April 2023

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The passage of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2011 revised the process for submission of Institutional Six Year Plans. As a reminder, the process is as follows:

In the odd numbered years, institutions develop and submit draft six-year plans on 1 July, meet with the “Op Six” Review Committee to formally present the plan, receive comments from the Review Committee by 1 September and respond to the comments and finalize the plan by 1 October. In the even-numbered years, institutions amend or affirm plans by 1 July, receive comments from the Review Committee by 1 September, and provide responses and/or revisions to the plan by 1 October. No formal meeting with the Review Committee is required.

Consistent with the Act, this year requires development and submission of the six-year plan and a formal meeting with the Review Committee. Members of the Review Committee include the Secretary of Finance, Secretary of Education, Director of the Department of Planning and Budget, Director of the State Council of Higher Education, Staff Director of the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee, and Staff Director of the House Appropriations Committee.

In December, Governor Youngkin will deliver the first biennial budget of his term. For institutions of higher education, the six-year plan submission begins the budget request process. In recognition of the importance of the six-year plan to the institutions’ budget development, the Administration has hired a consultant to review the submission process and work with institutions to make the process and the resulting plans more useful. The Boston Consulting Group won the contract award and will begin work with the institutions this month.

The template for submission of the plan should be received from SCHEV no later than 1 May. The submission typically includes the Institute’s academic, financial, and enrollment plans in addition to reports on certain objectives consistent with state requirements. Boards of Visitors are required to approve the six-year plans. Board approval of VMI’s final plan will be acted upon at the September meeting following receipt of the Review Committee comments on 1 September.



# 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: 28 April 2023

RE: Communications & Marketing Update

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This update covers the communications and marketing activities between January 2023 – March 2023 as well as projects currently in progress.

## I. MEDIA COVERAGE

Between January 1 and March 31, 6,564 news items mentioned or featured information about VMI. This is a decrease of 28% over the same period in 2022. Despite the decrease in overall volume, positive mentions of VMI remained constant compared to the previous year suggesting negative attention has decreased proportionally.

88% of the news items are categorized as positive or neutral in sentiment. Negative sentiment (12%) increased from 8.8% during the same period in 2022. Positive sentiment, increased from 21% in 2022 to 30% in 2023.

Potential reach of news coverage from 1 April to 31 August exceeded 26.82 billion possible readers, an increase of 24% over the same period last 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.

Not surprisingly, royalty revenue took a large hit during the pandemic and in the wake of the supply chain shortages. For academic year 2021-22, VMI collected \$80,861.27. This far exceeds the \$54,746.97 collected in the previous almost "normal" academic year, 2019-2020. Through three quarters of 2022-23, VMI has already generated \$86,245 in royalty revenue putting us on pace for a record-breaking year.

YEAR	ROYALTIES
2019-2020	\$54,746.97
2020-2021	\$42,031.63
2021-2022	\$80,861.27
2022-2023 (3 quarters)	\$86,245

### III. NEWS & EDITORIAL SERVICES

The News & Editorial Services team returned from winter furlough prepared to take on all that the spring semester had in store.

Before the cadets got back to post, the NES team learned of a cadet who was part of an avalanche rescue effort in the Austrian Alps. The word of his quick response alongside his brothers and a family friend was covered by news outlets across the country, including NBC affiliates in Connecticut, Boston, and Washington, D.C.

The team continued to work closely with departments on post to follow the final construction and opening of the Aquatic Center. The ribbon cutting was a big success with three TV stations covering the event. 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, allowed the team some creativity to develop a logo for the center, signage to advertise for the activities and food, and fun staged photography with cadet leadership before the opening. The NES team was at the ribbon-cutting ceremony and a local TV station visited the center prior to the opening. The team's cadet assistant also got photos of the first event in The Arsenal – watching the Super Bowl.

The story about VMI's first direct commissions into the U.S. Coast Guard was shared by Coast Guard partners and was very popular on social media. The program is getting remarkable feedback, and this story will expand in coming weeks as VMI highlights a few of the cadets who will take the oath on May 15.

A new human-interest story series kicked off featuring the unique hobbies and talents of VMI faculty and staff, including Col. John Brodie playing disc golf around the world, and Col. Houston Johnson bonding with his father while they hike in unique and historic places.

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.

Other major event support, that featured photography, stories for the website and social, media contact, etc. included:

- Rat Unity event that provided school supplies to two local elementary schools
- Breakout
- Braver Angels grant and first debate of the semester – Cadet-athlete/non-athlete divide

- Environment Virginia Symposium
- Honors Week, including an anniversary celebration
- USIBA Boxing Nationals
- Spring FTX
- Sports Hall of Fame

Additional stories sharing the good things happening at the Institute, along with graphic/signage/programs, and/or photography support:

- Faculty awards and accolades, including several faculty members on the With Good Reason radio program and the All-SoCon Faculty-Staff Team recognitions
- Rank announcements
- The VMI Theatre spring performance
- Engineering classes using the trebuchet
- Numerous academic speakers and cultural events, open to the entire community
- Cyber Defense events with larger banners, programs, shirts, etc.

NES also worked on the following during the first part of the spring semester:

- Discussions continue about WFXR placing a weather camera on the roof of Moody Hall. The final agreements are in the works and, once in place, the camera feed will be available on the WFXR website and will be accessible to many of the stations with Nexstar Media Group across the country.
- Local news stations have found VMI to be a great asset for experts to chime in on various news stories. Professors have been interviewed regarding classified documents, the war in Ukraine, the U.S. airstrike in Syria, and the Russians shooting down a drone.

Up ahead:

- Work has begun on the New Cadet Handbook that will guide incoming cadets and their parents as they prepare for matriculation.
- The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Institute Report is later this year – the team will take a look back at the special stories shared in the publication over the years.
- Retirement parade and highlighting a few folks who have made a significant impact on the Institute. A story about Dr. Copeland was well received by many alumni.
- Graduation, commissioning, end-of-year parades

#### IV. PUBLICATIONS

The Publications team continues to support the needs of the entire post. During the spring semester, the publications team worked on the following projects:

- VMI Fact Sheet
- Banners for legislative reception
- Parade Banner for the band
- Sports Hall of Fame program and recognition certificates
- Posters, tickets, and credentials for VMI Boxing tournament
- SMC Cyber Fusion program and nametags
- Parents Council letters and attachments
- Call to Duty postcards for Admissions

- QR recruiting postcards for Admissions
- Rifle tags for Commandant's Office
- Parents Council certificates
- Baccalaureate Invitations for Chaplain
- Admissions Information request cards
- DOI brochures update
- Employee Service certificates
- Class of 2003 memorial service bulletin
- Class of 1968 Memorial Program

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

- Cyber Fusion postcards for the CLE
- SMC Cyber Fusion programs for Cyber Fusion Lab
- Parent Connection form for Parents Council
- Environment Virginia programs for CLE
- Environment Virginia posters for the CLE
- Uniform Book for Chief of Staff
- Local Directory books for HR
- Career Fair handouts for HR
- Career Fair poster for HR

## V. ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS AND BRANDING

The Digital Communications team currently consists of C&M's assistant director of digital communication, social media specialist, and digital content specialist), and a videographer, currently 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 has been 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.

The OCB 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. Project priorities for Fall 2022 and Spring 2023 focused heavily on items most closely tied to Admissions and recruitment.

### **Project Highlights:**

Monthly:

- Continue to work with BrightEdge vendor for search engine optimization (SEO) of the vmi.edu website and provide data to supervisor and stakeholders
- Create analytics reports for website and social media use and interaction



- 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

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 Insitute

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)

**Digital Communications goals within VMI's 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. The assistant director also designed the public-facing portion of the U360 app purchased for Corps communications to focus on marketing VMI and encouraging interactions with the Admissions team.

Since becoming the new liaison for the VMI Parents Council in May, C&M has collaborated with PC 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. 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. 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 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 13 requests from Jan. 1 – April 1, 2023.

### **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.

**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.

Jan. 1 – March 25 Year-Over-Year Comparison				
FACEBOOK	Fans/Followers	Engagement	Impressions	Brand Awareness
2022	34,818	162,546	4,062,278	3,001

2023	36,260	124,679	3,268,142	1,378
<b>% Change</b>	<b>4.14%</b>	<b>-23.3%</b>	<b>-19.55%</b>	<b>-54.1%</b>
<b>INSTAGRAM</b>	<b>Fans/Followers</b>	<b>Engagement</b>	<b>Impressions</b>	<b>Brand Awareness</b>
2022	19,818	92,516	1,942,759	668
2023	21,128	78,833	1,226,496	706
<b>% Change</b>	<b>6.61%</b>	<b>-14.79%</b>	<b>-36.87%</b>	<b>5.69%</b>
<b>LINKEDIN</b>	<b>Fans/Followers</b>	<b>Engagement</b>	<b>Impressions</b>	<b>Total Reached Users</b>
2022	20,188	137,189	603,463	295,170
2023	22,413	71,396	444,939	207,821
<b>% Change</b>	<b>11.02%</b>	<b>-47.96%</b>	<b>-26.27%</b>	<b>-30%</b>
<b>TWITTER</b>	<b>Fans/Followers</b>	<b>Engagement</b>	<b>Impressions</b>	<b>Brand Awareness</b>
2022	4,868	3,424		294
2023	5,487	2,619		181
<b>% Change</b>	<b>12.72%</b>	<b>-23.51%</b>		<b>-38.44%</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, the drops are far less significant compared to the report covering Fall 2022 vs. Fall 2021.
- 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 take into account 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.

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 graduation events.*

Jan. 1 – March 25, 2023 Compared to Oct. 9 – Dec. 21, 2022				
<b>FACEBOOK</b>	Fans/Followers	Engagement	Impressions	Brand Awareness
	36,260	124,679	3,268,142	1,378
<b>% Change</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>7.1%</b>
<b>INSTAGRAM</b>	Fans/Followers	Engagement	Impressions	Brand Awareness
	21,128	78,833	1,226,496	706
<b>% Change</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>16.5%</b>	<b>30.5%</b>	<b>28.4%</b>
<b>LINKEDIN</b>	Fans/Followers	Engagement	Impressions	Total Reached Users
	22,413	71,396	444,939	207,821
<b>% Change</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>-6%</b>	<b>31.7%</b>	<b>24.5%</b>
<b>TWITTER</b>	Fans/Followers	Engagement	Impressions	Brand Awareness
	5,487	2,619		181
<b>% Change</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>137.7%</b>		<b>86.6%</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. The ‘Fakeout’ video alone now has over 27,000 views. Reels posted since Fall 2022 are averaging almost 10,000 views, far exceeding previous performance.

Videos produced during the January – March window included:

- ‘Fakeout’ - over 27,000 views
- ROTC-focused ‘Don’t Do Ordinary’ - over 12,000 views
- Open House promo – over 8,000 views
- Air Force ROTC (to coordinate with admissions push) - over 10,000 views
- Club Boxing (USIBA promo) - over 13,000 views

The best performing items for each platform by engagement from Jan. 1 – March 23, 2023 were:

**Facebook:**

Rank	January	February	March
1	<b>“Fakeout”</b> - Video post for rare event, compiled from cadet footage	<b>Breakout post #1</b> - Yearly event photo-focused	<b>Aquatic Center making a splash</b> - Combined athletic use images with cadet courses for balance
2	<b>2022 Sports Hall of Fame</b> - Yearly event, highlight for alumni	<b>Breakout post #2</b> - Yearly event photo-focused	<b>VMI Club Pistol Team at Intercollegiate Nationals:</b> featured story continuing clubs & activities focus
3	<b>Cadets return from Winter furlough</b> - New focus on more classic college events/days covered by other accounts	<b>Col. Brodie &amp; band in New Orleans</b> – Simple caption highlighting cadet life opportunities from submitted photos.	<b>Chessie Nature Trail ranking</b> – connecting major award to cadet life

**Instagram:**

Rank	January	February	March
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1	<b>“Fakeout”</b> - Video post for rare event, compiled from cadet footage	<b>Breakout post #2</b> - Yearly event photo-focused	<b>Rising 1/C Rank Announcements</b> – new approach showing joy in accomplishment rather than standard photo-op
2	<b>Erik Gottmann '25 avalanche rescue</b> – news coverage of cadet excellence in adversity	<b>Breakout post #1</b> – Yearly event photo-focused	<b>4/C Shoulder board ceremony</b> – highlighting Corps connection and accomplishment
3	<b>Rat Rifle Run</b> – Yearly event with a tailored approach highlighting hard work of cadets.	<b>Black History Month: McDew</b> – New initiative focused on promoting DOI concepts without controversy.	<b>Extra Mile: Combat Shooting</b> – first of new featured story series continuing clubs & activities focus

[LinkedIn:](#)

Rank	January	February	March
1	<b>2022 Sports Hall of Fame</b> - Yearly event, highlight for alumni	<b>Midwinter Formal</b> – play on words of Bond themed event	<b>Rising 1/C Rank Announcements</b> – new approach showing joy in accomplishment rather than standard photo-op
2	<b>Aquatic Center Ribbon Cutting</b> – focused on improvements to post	<b>20 Mile March</b> - Yearly event photo-focused with emphasis on cadets happy to be at VMI	<b>Chessie Nature Trail ranking</b> – connecting major award to cadet life
3	<b>Erik Gottmann '25 avalanche rescue</b> – news coverage of cadet excellence in adversity	<b>Happy Presidents Day</b> – Archival focus of famous visits to post	<b>VMI Club Pistol Team at Intercollegiate Nationals:</b> featured story continuing clubs & activities focus

[Twitter:](#)

Rank	January	February	March
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1	<b>Cadets return from Winter furlough</b> - New focus on more classic college events/days covered by other accounts	<b>Breakout post #1</b> - Yearly event photo-focused	<b>Women's History Month</b> – New initiative focused on promoting DOI concepts without controversy.
2	<b>Happy New Year from VMI</b> - National holiday with photo of post edited with text	<b>Breakout post #2</b> - Yearly event photo-focused	<b>Chessie Nature Trail ranking</b> – connecting major award to cadet life
3	<b>First day of classes</b> – yearly event with focus on happy cadets	<b>Black History Month: McDew</b> – New initiative focused on promoting DOI concepts.	<b>4/C Shoulder board ceremony</b> – highlighting Corps connection and accomplishment

**Additional Social Media Information:**

A more detailed breakdown of [top monthly posts](#), including screenshots is available. Yearly analytics trend reports are available as [accessible, downloadable charts](#) to track yearly progress. [requires VMI log-in]

VI. WEB

The VMI Web Team continues to focus on providing timely, accurate, and engaging content across the 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 is the next major project, and is already underway. Section and subsection landing pages, such as Academics, Academic Program Research, and Support have already been completed. 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.

### Site Traffic Review:

The website as a whole continues to see increased traffic, including high importance pages such as admissions and financial aid content. In July 2023, Google Analytics will be transitioning their formatting and API, so some reporting regarding website usage may change going forward.

## Jan. - March 27, 2023 compared to Jan. - March 27, 2022 Performance of Top 15 Pages by Users

^ = Admissions content

\*\* = Redesigned since March 2022

\*\*\* = New page since March 2022

Page	Users	New Users	Pageviews	Pages/Session	Avg. Time on Page
<b>Homepage</b>	<b>79,961</b> + 12.34%	<b>69,160</b> + 14.52%	<b>183,557</b> - 5.87%	<b>1.27</b> - 1.36%	<b>2:10</b> - 2.48%
<b>Academics Landing **</b>	<b>8,856</b> + 2.57%	<b>889</b> + 63.42%	<b>13,939</b> + 3.73%	<b>9.67</b> - 21.23%	<b>0:42</b> + 20.50%
<b>Admissions Landing ^ *</b>	<b>8,813</b> + 9.06%	<b>1,468</b> + 17.72%	<b>13,919</b> + 11.01%	<b>5.67</b> - 9.37%	<b>0:59</b> + 33.30%
<b>About Landing</b>	<b>8,796</b> +16.27%	<b>1,727</b> -44.16%	<b>11,635</b> - 13.46%	<b>4.57</b> + 42.72%	<b>1:16</b> - 7.89%
<b>Visit ^ *</b>	<b>6,895</b> -7.19%	<b>3,317</b> -10.59%	<b>9,786</b> - 9.36%	<b>1.94</b> - 2.89%	<b>3:09</b> + 26.26%
<b>Crit. Dates &amp; Ac. Cal. ***</b>	<b>6,828</b>	<b>4,443</b>	<b>10,024</b>	<b>1.36</b>	<b>2:30</b>
<b>Cadet Life Landing **</b>	<b>5,655</b> + 2.15%	<b>803</b> + 189.89%	<b>7,569</b> - 0.77%	<b>5.55</b> - 40.97%	<b>1:17</b> + 0.89%
<b>Apply ^ **</b>	<b>5,125</b> + 22.08%	<b>1,700</b> + 75.98%	<b>10,923</b> + 38.20%	<b>2.86</b> - 32.22%	<b>2:40</b> + 94.64%
<b>Majors and Minors</b>	<b>4,809</b> - 19.33%	<b>629</b> - 44.19%	<b>6,885</b> - 14.56%	<b>5.29</b> + 19.63%	<b>1:47</b> + 11.53%
<b>VMCW Homepage</b>	<b>3,920</b> + 16.36%	<b>3,523</b> + 19.06%	<b>6,003</b> + 15.18%	<b>1.44</b> - 0.76%	<b>1:11</b> - 1.24%
<b>Clubs and Activities **</b>	<b>3,052</b> + 179.74%	<b>2,161</b> + 980.50%	<b>3,520</b> + 119.86%	<b>1.48</b> - 60.97%	<b>2:43</b> + 24.60%
<b>USIBA ***</b>	<b>2,865</b>	<b>2,608</b>	<b>9,969</b>	<b>1.39</b>	<b>6:41</b>

<b>Offices A-Z</b>	<b>2,827</b> - 2.21%	<b>307</b> + 28.52%	<b>5,603</b> + 7.11%	<b>8.35</b> - 16.03%	<b>0:39</b> - 8.81%
<b>Tuition and Fees ^</b>	<b>2,717</b> + 19.80%	<b>1,236</b> + 38.41%	<b>3,423</b> + 16.35%	<b>1.80</b> - 13.37%	<b>3:15</b> + 22.49%
<b>Cadet Lead. &amp; Devel. **</b>	<b>2,518</b> + 361.17%	<b>2,114</b> + 5,940%	<b>2,634</b> + 254.99%	<b>1.22</b> - 90.98%	<b>1:10</b> + 27.46%

### Content Drilldown by Section:

Website Section	Pageviews	Unique Pageviews	Users	New Users
Homepage	<b>-5.87%</b> 183,557 vs 195,012	<b>-3.92%</b> 155,821 vs 162,181	<b>12.34%</b> 79,961 vs 71,175	<b>14.52%</b> 324,912 vs 150,699
About	<b>2.61%</b> 144,875 vs 141,190	<b>8.11%</b> 127,968 vs 118,370	<b>54.63%</b> 65,085 vs 42,090	<b>109.41%</b> 48,051 vs 22,946
Academics	<b>34.51%</b> 136,240 vs 101,286	<b>40.77%</b> 122,246 vs 86,840	<b>103.93%</b> 63,307 vs 31,043	<b>193.05%</b> 48,289 vs 16,478
Admissions	<b>5.87%</b> 53,852 vs 50,865	<b>10.09%</b> 45,220 vs 41,075	<b>16.81%</b> 23,273 vs 19,923	<b>34.97%</b> 11,734 vs 8,694
Cadet Life	<b>43.07%</b> 55,843 vs 39,032	<b>52.59%</b> 51,452 vs 33,719	<b>111.25%</b> 35,287 vs 16,704	<b>234.20%</b> 26,081 vs 7,804
Museums [Archives included under Academics/Library]	<b>32.10%</b> 40,001 vs 30,280	<b>41.89%</b> 34,708 vs 24,462	<b>77.23%</b> 20,511 vs 11,573	<b>91.43%</b> 18,881 vs 9,863

### Recruitment-Specific Analytics, Jan. - March 27, 2023 [compared to Oct. 7 – Dec. 31]

- Inquiry Form & Questionnaire [Latest Version]
  - o **1,543** total clicks from vmi.edu [up 83.91%]
- Visits to Post View from apply page:
  - o **2,934** [down 27.96%]
- Spring Open House Form Clicks: 1,418 [up 197.9%]
  - o 485 responses for rate of 34.2%
- Virtual Open House Form Clicks: 128 [no data for comparison]
  - o 105 responses for rate of 82%
- Admissions PDF downloads [*compared to previous year*]:
  - o Document Checklist: **1,925** [up 105.01%]
  - o Application Instructions: **428** [new doc, no comparison data]
  - o Sample Open House Itinerary: **944** [new doc, no comparison data]
  - o Application for Admission (print version): **173** [down 23.45%]
  - o Document Checklist for International Students: **139** [up 28.7%]
  - o Document Checklist for Transfer Students: **89** [down 33.08%]
- **Admissions** section of the website saw, as compared to Jan 1 – March 27, 2022:
  - o **5.87%** increase in pageviews
  - o **16.81%** increase in users
  - o **34.97%** increase in new users
  - o **27.26%** increase in average time on page

- **Financial Aid** section of the website saw, as compared to Jan 1 – March 27, 2022:
  - o **21.66%** increase in pageviews
  - o **51.76%** increase in users
  - o **147.75%** increase in new users
  - o **13.96%** increase in average time on page

**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 has been 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.

While successes vary from week to week as Google recrawls all websites, and all sites work to perform the same edits and upgrades as VMI.edu, there are some standard analytics that are tracked to check progress. The first item is which tracked keywords place the VMI website on page 1 of Google. The second is which pages moved up the most on Google. Please note, these are targeted keywords connected to page improvements and competitor research. None of these include any branded terms, such as ‘VMI’ or ‘postview’ which always show the site on page 1.

**Weekly Keyword ‘Wins’:**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Keywords - Page 1</b>	<b>5 Biggest Gains in Google Rank [page]</b>
Jan. 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• military schools in va</li> <li>• military schools virginia</li> <li>• military schools in virginia</li> <li>• military academy virginia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• military colleges +36 [5]</li> <li>• civil engineering in the military +24 [3]</li> <li>• navy rotc program +22 [2]</li> <li>• military academy +20 [3]</li> <li>• military schools usa +20 [6]</li> </ul>
Jan. 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• military schools in va</li> <li>• military schools virginia</li> <li>• Air Force ROTC</li> <li>• rotc programs air force</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• navy rotc +80 [2]</li> <li>• battalions +41 [6]</li> <li>• cadets +37 [3]</li> <li>• corps of cadets +28 [7]</li> <li>• Air Force ROTC +23 [1]</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• military schools in virginia</li> <li>• military academy virginia</li> </ul>	
Jan. 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• military university</li> <li>• navy rotc</li> <li>• military application</li> <li>• military academy virginia</li> <li>• military schools virginia</li> <li>• military schools in va</li> <li>• military schools in virginia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• military branch +45 [5]</li> <li>• military academy us +38 [4]</li> <li>• civil engineering in the military +36 [2]</li> <li>• rotc scholarship deadline +25 [6]</li> <li>• top military colleges +20 [5]</li> </ul>
Jan. 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• rotc military</li> <li>• military schools in va</li> <li>• military schools virginia</li> <li>• military schools in virginia</li> <li>• military academy virginia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sign up for the military + 68 [4]</li> <li>• cadet +55 [3]</li> <li>• naval +24 [8]</li> <li>• best military schools in the us +23 [8]</li> <li>• military schools USA +21 [8]</li> </ul>
Feb. 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• navy rotc</li> <li>• marine rotc programs</li> <li>• military schools in virginia</li> <li>• military academy virginia</li> <li>• military application</li> <li>• military schools in va</li> <li>• military schools virginia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• navy rotc +89 [1]</li> <li>• reserve officers training corps +66 [3]</li> <li>• scholarships military +63 [3]</li> <li>• barracks +38 [5]</li> <li>• Naval ROTC +37 [5]</li> </ul>
Feb. 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• military schools in va</li> <li>• military schools in virginia</li> <li>• military schools virginia</li> <li>• military academy virginia</li> <li>• military application</li> <li>• marine rotc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• military civil engineer +77 [3]</li> <li>• military branch +58 [4]</li> <li>• online applications +38 [7]</li> <li>• civil engineering in the military +20 [3]</li> <li>• u.s. military schools +18 [9]</li> </ul>
Feb. 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• navy rotc</li> <li>• military requirements</li> <li>• military academy virginia</li> <li>• military schools in va</li> <li>• military schools virginia</li> <li>• military schools in virginia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• rotc scholarships application +54 [5]</li> <li>• rotc scholarship +48 [5]</li> <li>• colleges in va +43 [5]</li> <li>• virginia universities +41 [6]</li> <li>• rotc scholarships +35 [7]</li> </ul>
Feb. 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• marine rotc</li> <li>• marine rotc programs</li> <li>• military academy virginia</li> <li>• military schools in virginia</li> <li>• military schools in va</li> <li>• military schools virginia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• museum of war +82 [2]</li> <li>• military university +80 [2]</li> <li>• naval +29 [7]</li> <li>• military academy +27 [3]</li> <li>• Naval ROTC +26 [4]</li> </ul>
March 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air Force ROTC</li> <li>• military academy virginia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• disciplines of civil engineering +58 [5]</li> <li>• navy rotc +52 [2]</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• military schools in va</li> <li>• military schools virginia</li> <li>• marine rotc programs</li> <li>• military schools in virginia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• rotc scholarships +36 [7]</li> <li>• political science and international relations courses +29 [8]</li> <li>• military classes +26 [4]</li> </ul>
March 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cadet</li> <li>• military colleges in the us</li> <li>• airforce rotc</li> <li>• military academy virginia</li> <li>• Air Force ROTC</li> <li>• military schools in virginia</li> <li>• military schools in va</li> <li>• military schools virginia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cadet +93 [1]</li> <li>• military colleges in the us +57 [1]</li> <li>• rotc scholarships application +46 [4]</li> <li>• military universities +35 [2]</li> <li>• top military colleges +35 [4]</li> </ul>
March 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• military academy virginia</li> <li>• Air Force ROTC</li> <li>• airforce rotc</li> <li>• military schools in virginia</li> <li>• military schools in va</li> <li>• military schools virginia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sign up for the military +81 [2]</li> <li>• military university +33 [6]</li> <li>• online applications +29 [8]</li> <li>• battalions +22 [8]</li> <li>• colleges with military programs +21 [3]</li> </ul>
March 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• airforce rotc</li> <li>• Air Force ROTC</li> <li>• military academy virginia</li> <li>• military schools in virginia</li> <li>• military schools in va</li> <li>• military schools virginia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• military schools us +76 [3]</li> <li>• reserve officers training corps +68 [2]</li> <li>• military schools +32 [4]</li> <li>• military branch +56 [5]</li> <li>• u.s. military schools +54 [3]</li> </ul>

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.

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. Finally, the team has begun work on a redesign of a virtual map first completed as a cadet project years ago that is in need of update while a larger scale virtual tour is being evaluated for the Institute.

## **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. 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.

## 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.

## VII. MARKETING

VMI's paid marketing efforts during 2022-2023 have focused solely on increasing yield among appointed cadets. Working with Ruffalo Noel Levitz (RNL), VMI has targeted appointed cadets with digital advertising and personalized videos to encourage them to pay their deposits to VMI. Additionally, VMI is able to use our list of appointed cadets for a campaign to find "lookalike" prospects. These are high school students who have similar qualities to those who have already been appointed. This campaign has targeted our current pipeline areas as well as high schools near military bases in and around the mid-Atlantic region.

While we won't know for sure how effective the campaign has been until matriculation, preliminary data shows the campaign is performing very well versus national averages. Digital ads served on SnapChat are VMI's highest performing garnering a 2.29% click-through rate compared to a national average of between 0.35% - 1.5%. To date, the campaign has driven nearly 5,000 unique visitors to VMI's deposit or apply landing pages.

## VIII. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

Between January 1 and April 15, 2023, C&M responded to 50 FOIA requests. To put this into perspective, VMI responded to 54 FOIA requests during the entire 2021 calendar year and 113 in calendar year 2022. The volume of requests has been taxing on C&M staffing resources. 34 of the 50 FOIA request during 2023 have been filed by four individuals.

The director of communications and marketing in their role as FOIA officer has spent between 90 – 100% of his time working on FOIA requests depending on the week. While the FOIA statute allows state agencies to charge for the cost of fulfilling a FOIA request, state agencies can only charge for the cost of searching for, reviewing, redacting responsive records as well as any copying or mailing expenses. VMI's General Order 5 requires that a requester be charged for costs in excess of \$50. The challenge is that there is so much legwork involved in trying to determine where responsive records might be and helping departments understand what their responsibilities. Each FOIA request is gobbling up time that cannot be billed to a requester. One FOIA request was so broad that VMI had to engage a third-party vendor to provide an estimate (\$2.4 million) to develop an estimate to fulfill the request. In the end, it is the cadets who end up paying for the exponential increase in FOIA costs to the Institute.

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





VMI ALUMNI AGENCIES  
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION • FOUNDATION • KEYDET CLUB

**VMI Board of Visitors  
External Relations  
Communications Overview  
April, 2023**



VMI ALUMNI AGENCIES  
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION • FOUNDATION • KEYDET CLUB

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## Strategic Communications

- Bringing VMI, Cadets and Alumni to our Constituents
  - Cadet Connects Videos
  - Turnouts Monthly Newsletter
  - Alumni Review
  - Social Media
  - Website
- Communications Resources
  - Chapter and Region Support
  - Alumni Survey
  - Volunteer Leader Resources
    - Just the Facts Communications,
    - Talking Points for Common Questions, Current Events Updates
- Fundraising Support
  - Fundraising Assets
  - Crowd Funding
  - Stewardship Assets



VMI ALUMNI AGENCIES  
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# Strategic Communications: January – March 2023

## Telling the VMI Story

### Full-Page Ad Campaign

VMI Alumni Association  
Published by Victoria Ferris • March 19 at 09:00 AM

That's the spirit of VMI. The spirit of service, leadership, and honor. That's the spirit of VMI. The spirit of service, leadership, and honor. That's the spirit of VMI. The spirit of service, leadership, and honor.

**No.1**  
99%  
of graduates are employed within 90 days of graduation.

**No.2**  
No. 23  
in the nation for best value.

**No.4**  
No. 4  
in the nation for best value.

**No.5**  
No. 5  
in the nation for best value.

VMI ALUMNI AGENCIES  
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION • FOUNDATION • KEYDET CLUB

**17,000+ Reach**  
**4 Papers +110K**  
**social media**  
**100% More than last 50**

### Corps Connects

Ripley '23: 1st Class Private Success - Email - cdbanhang@miaa.org

Ripley '23: 1st Class Private Success

David Prasnicki - cDPRAS@VMAA.org

To: Christian Heitman

As the academic year starts to wind down, I'd like to introduce you to Cadet Scout Ripley '23. His name may be familiar, as he was this year's Keydet Club Three-Legged Scout Award recipient. You can rest assured this Division I lacrosse athlete has used his time at VMI wisely.

Now, as a 1st Class Private, Ripley's VMI experience is coming full circle as he fosters a relationship with his rat and prepares for graduation. He says the connections from VMI will be the most helpful in his future career. We will be generously donating uniforms who helped make his experience possible.

Soon, we will graduate, commission in the Marine Corps, and further prove that cadets at VMI never settle for ordinary.

David Prasnicki  
Chief Executive Officer  
VMI Alumni Agencies

**12,600 Page Views**

### Social Media: 4 Platforms

VMI Alumni Association  
Published by Victoria Ferris • February 13

Now presenting: The VMI Class of 2028.  
Congratulations to the newest members of the VMI Corps of Cadets!

**200K Page Views**

### Alumni Review & Turnouts

ALUMNI VMI REVIEW  
2023 - ISSUE 2

VMI TURNOUTS  
A VMI ALUMNI AGENCIES DIGITAL NEWSLETTER

publications?&publication\_id=2023&publication\_medium=email&utm\_campaign=2023&url=https://www.vmi.edu/alumni-associations/turnouts

# Branded Content Advertising Campaign

Primary audience: Alumni

Secondary audience: Prospective Parents  
Northern Virginia, Baltimore

Geo-Targeting  
20+ Military Bases, 20-Mile Radius

## Branded Content Articles

- Richmond Times-Dispatch
- Winston Salem Journal
- [RTD Landing Page](#)

## Social Boosting

- Using RTD & WSJ Pages

## Display Ads

- Banner ads
- "Related content" ads

## Video Ads

- YouTube
- OTT (Amazon Fire Stick)

## "No Ordinary" Landing Page

- Highlights points of pride and outstanding rankings
- Pushes to admissions pages



VMI ALUMNI AGENCIES  
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION • FOUNDATION • KEYDET CLUB

# Strategic Communications Dec. 15 – April 17, 2023

## Branded Content Campaign

**Richmond Times-Dispatch** with VMI Alumni Association  
 Find something interesting to read? Try our new feature: Branded content. It's a new way for you to reach your audience. It's a new way for you to reach your audience. It's a new way for you to reach your audience.

**Washington State Journal** | Interview with VMI Alumni Association  
 We've seen a lot of college experience you picked, but Virginia Military Institute will make you look back. Read on to find out what makes the VMI stand out from the rest of the college experience.

**Never Settle for Ordinary**  
 VIRGINIAMILITARY.ORG  
 Virginia Military Institute: A superior education for military or civilian career paths.

**Never Settle for Ordinary**  
 Virginia Military Institute is no ordinary college. Cadets are always striving for a higher standard.  
 LEARN MORE

**Advertisement**

**Ad Choices**

### RTD/WSJ Articles

8,750+  
Article Views

### No Ordinary Alumni Web

2,500+  
page views

### Social Boosting RTD Article

7031  
Social Media Clicks

1400 Unique Clicks  
4.4X ↑ Benchmark

### YouTube Video

57.51%  
Full Length Views  
326k

35% Nat'l Benchmark







Virginia Military Institute  
Lexington, Virginia