VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE
Lexington, Virginia

GENERAL ORDER)
NUMBER 75) 19 October 2026

VALEDICTORIAN ELECTION POLICY

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to establish standard procedures and guidelines for the selection of the valedictorian by the graduating First Class. The valedictorian is elected by the graduating class and serves an important role at Commencement in delivering an address on behalf of the class. It is a historical event that is intended to reflect the thoughts and disposition of the class at the end of their undergraduate years at VMI.

2. **Criteria:** The valedictorian is historically a Cadet who has excelled academically and in all other aspects of Cadet life. The valedictorian must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.50 or higher to be considered for selection. The valedictorian speaking at graduation is presumed to represent the very best of his or her class in terms of intellect, personal and professional standards, and general adherence to the ideals of the citizen-soldier.

3. **Roles and Responsibilities:**

   A. First Class Officers: Class Officers are responsible for initiating the process to select the valedictorian. The President is ultimately in charge of the process. He or she may choose to appoint one or more responsible class members to either assist in or oversee the process with the First Class officers. In the event any of the officers or other participants in the process are nominated to be valedictorian, those individuals must recuse themselves from the selection process until such time as they are no longer candidates.

   B. Commandant for Cadet Government: The Assistant Commandant will provide oversight and guidance to the class officers on the selection process, monitoring the election process and as necessary consulting on the selection. He or she will provide the names of all graduating Cadets with a cumulative grade point average of 3.50 or higher to the First Class President at the start of the election process. Only Cadets on that list can be considered for election as Valedictorian.

   C. Valedictorian: The elected Cadet will contact the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs to plan a schedule for drafting the speech. The Cadet will draft the remarks and work closely with the advisor so that the speech is in final form by the end of the first week in May. The valedictorian is responsible for the content of the speech, but is reminded that it must be in good taste and appropriate to the day.

D. Associate Dean for Academic Affairs: The Associate Dean will counsel the valedictorian on the purpose and content of his or her address, discussing ideas and reviewing drafts. The Associate Dean will ensure that a hard copy of the final speech is placed in the lectern book prior to Commencement and is submitted to the VMI Archives, both electronically and in hard copy, as the historical record of the address.

E. Chief of Staff: The Chief of Staff will review the final draft of the speech and may request edits.

4. Selection Process:

A. In the spring semester of each year, the First Class President (or his/her designee) will initiate the process to select a valedictorian.

B. Starting 1 April, each Cadet from the graduating class votes for one candidate from the published list. The voting is done by an electronic method determined by the First Class General Committee.

C. On 10 April, all votes are tallied, and the top five candidates (by plurality) remain on the list.

D. Starting 11 April, the remaining five candidates are voted on again in the same fashion.

E. On 15 April, all votes are tallied, and the top candidate (by plurality) is named valedictorian. At this point, the valedictorian will coordinate his/her speech writing process with the Dean's Office.

F. In the event that two or more candidates receive the same number of votes, a tie breaking vote is conducted with the candidate receiving the plurality of votes named the valedictorian.

G. The Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment may provide technical assistance with electronic voting systems if desired.

FOR THE SUPERINTENDENT:

Travis Homiak
Colonel, USMC (Ret.)
Chief of Staff

DIST: E
OPR: Chief of Staff