VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE
Lexington, Virginia

GENERAL ORDER)
NUMBER 96) 19 October 2026

Superintendent's Statement of Free Speech

Virginia Military Institute (VMI) is committed to free speech and expression, and academic freedom to enhance the cultural and educational experience of its cadets, employees, and the VMI community.

The Institute is committed to furthering knowledge and understanding through free inquiry. VMI recognizes that respectfully engaging a broad range of perspectives and diverse experiences is essential to intellectual growth and builds understanding and empathy.

The ability to speak freely, exercise academic freedom, and engage with individuals and organizations having differing viewpoints is essential to prepare cadets for their military, civilian, and academic pursuits. Cadets, employees, and members of the VMI community are encouraged to express opinions, ideas, matters of conscience, and engage in vigorous debate.

Speech may not be suppressed simply because it is unwelcome. VMI recognizes, however, that freedom of expression has certain limits recognized under the law, for example, when such expression incites criminal behavior or is defamatory in nature. Further, VMI discourages any conduct not in keeping with VMI values and may act regarding conduct that harasses, threatens, or spreads information that is patently false.

VMI may reasonably regulate the time, place, and manner of expression in a viewpoint-neutral manner to ensure the safety and security of the VMI community. In addition, VMI reserves the right to freely respond on its behalf and to affirmatively communicate its values and principles. In keeping with its mission and values as a senior military college, VMI recognizes the Superintendent's authority to uphold the good order and discipline of the Corps of Cadets while facilitating the exercise of free speech that is essential to all institutions of higher learning.

David J. Furness, '87
Lieutenant General, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.)
Superintendent

DIST: E, Cadets