



## ***VMI Reaffirms Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion***

VMI has undertaken significant measures to strengthen our diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts to foster a supportive culture for all members of the Institute's community. The following are just a few of the examples that demonstrate VMI's committed to DEI.

### **Expanded Enrollment of Cadets of Color and Underrepresented Populations**

- Between 1992 and 2020, VMI has improved the enrollment of cadets of color from 12.7% to 23.4% of each class.
- Total enrollment of underrepresented populations ("URP") increased from 29% in 2014 to 35% in 2020.

### **Recruitment and Improved Retention of Female Cadets**

- Between 2009 and 2018, VMI has improved its six-year graduation rates for female cadets from 65% to 79%.
- Female students make up approximately 12-15% of each incoming class, with a high of 17% in 2018.

### **Recruitment and Retention of Diverse Academic Faculty and Coaching Staff**

- 34% of full-time, tenure-track VMI faculty members are women.
- 2 (out of 15) department heads are women, as of August 2021.
- 11% of full-time, tenure-track faculty members are BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color).
- Between 2013 and 2020, VMI increased its intercollegiate athletics department staffing from four to 11 women, and from five to 11 ethnic minorities.

### **Chief Diversity Officer**

- VMI will soon announce the hiring of its first chief diversity officer, reporting directly to the superintendent.
- We've conducted a national search, and the search committee included the various classifications of employees on post as well as an external advisor familiar with military education.
- The target start date is before the new academic year.

### **Appointment of New VMI Superintendent**

- Maj. Gen. (MG) Cedric Wins was confirmed as the 15<sup>th</sup> VMI Superintendent in April 2021, by a unanimous vote of the VMI Board of Visitors. MG Wins served as interim Superintendent effective November 2020.
- Prior to assuming the role of interim superintendent, MG Wins spent 34 years as an officer in the U.S. Army. In his final command, MG Wins was the first commanding general of the U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command. He holds two master's degrees, one in management from the Florida Institute of Technology and one in national security and strategic studies from the National War College.
- MG Wins spent much of the first three months of his tenure as VMI's interim superintendent conducting an assessment of the culture, policies, and procedures currently in place.
- In spring 2021, MG Wins conducted at least 24 "listening sessions" with the VMI community (cadets, faculty, staff, and alumni) on key issues, including race and gender relations, and gathered input on VMI's path forward.

### **Appointment of the First Female Regimental Commander**

- Cadet Kasey Meredith '22 has been named VMI's next cadet first captain and regimental commander, the highest-ranking position a cadet can earn, for the 2021-2022 academic year. She is the 188<sup>th</sup> regimental commander and the first female in VMI's 182-year history to hold the position.
- Cadet Meredith is an International Studies major, with a minor in Spanish, and she is a member of the Marine Corps ROTC program. Cadet Meredith plans to commission in the U.S. Marine Corps after graduation.
- As regimental commander, Meredith will be the military commander of the Corps of Cadets, responsible to the commandant of cadets for the training, appearance, discipline, health, welfare, and morale of the Corps.

### **On Post Success by Cadets of Color and Female Cadets**

- Using a snapshot from the decade that preceded the promotion of Cadet Meredith, VMI is actively encouraging gender and racial diversity in cadet leadership roles.
- In addition, between 2016 and 2020, the percentage of Institute awards earned by cadets of color and female cadets increased from 29% to 35% (of the total awards).

### **Celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VMI Integration**

- In 2019, VMI hosted a panel discussion to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of integrating the Institute.
- The Institute welcomed back members of the Class of 1972, the inaugural integrated class (each of whom matriculated in 1968).

### **Celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Coeducational Corps**

- Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg address ceremony marking anniversary of coeducational corps.
- Numbers of the first female cadet class take part in the event which drew praise from national dignitaries.

### **DEI Committee of the VMI Board of Visitors**

- DEI Committee formed in October 2020 to oversee and monitor all race and gender related matters.
- Includes members of the Board of Visitors, two non-voting members of the VMI staff, and one non-voting cadet member.
- Inaugural meeting held in November 2020, and included all Board of Visitors members, the commonwealth's chief diversity officer, the secretary of education, and the deputy secretary of education.
- Recent meetings have included detailed reports on the Institute's diversity dashboard, diversity recruitment planning document (draft), updates on the hiring of VMI's chief diversity officer and the *ONE Virginia Plan*.

### **General Adoption of Delegate Jennifer Carroll Foy's Seven Guiding Principles on DEI**

- At the October 2020 Board of Visitors meeting, Delegate Carroll Foy's (VMI '03) seven guiding principles were adopted into the VMI Specified and Implied Task list, as follows:
  1. Updating the policies, procedures, plans, and goals to include a diverse constituency.
  2. Developing a culture where racism of any kind is not tolerated.
  3. Racism, sexism, and bullying should be handled by the cadet run General Committee, and elevated to the same level as the Honor System – single sanction.
  4. Ongoing diversity training for the leadership, staff, and faculty – conducted on a semi-annual basis.
  5. Mandatory diversity education for the entire corps.
  6. A fully funded diversity & inclusion office that works with the Cadet Equity Association.
  7. Partnership with organizations with proven track records of identifying qualified minority applicants who are seeking careers in civil and/or military service.

### **Diversity Dashboard**

- Launched in October 2020 to monitor admissions, graduation rates, and hiring at all levels of the Institute, to encourage and enhance DEI initiatives.
- Developed with input from the teaching and research faculty, administrative and professional faculty, classified employees, the commonwealth's chief diversity officer, and DEI professionals from James Madison University.

### **Ceremonies and Memorials Naming and Review Committee of the Board of Visitors**

- Formed in October 2020 to review and make recommendations to the Board regarding all confederate iconography and make recommendations going forward for naming.

### **Relocation of Stonewall Jackson Statue**

- In October 2020, the VMI BOV voted unanimously to remove the statue of General Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson from the post.
- The statue was relocated to an appropriate storage location and will be erected at the New Market Battlefield in the summer of 2021.

### **Modification of the New Market Ceremony**

- All alumni/cadets who have sacrificed their lives in military service are remembered, across all wars, without naming any specific alumna/alumnus or cadet, or focusing on any particular war or conflict.
- This ceremony is now known as the Memorial Parade, and it was held for the first time on May 14, 2021.

### **Changes to New Cadet Orientation**

- Relocated the new cadet oath ceremony from New Market battlefield to the VMI post and discontinued the re-enactment charge on the New Market battlefield by new cadets.
- The theme of these events remains perseverance, determination in overcoming seemingly impossible obstacles, and the class unity.
- VMI is assessing conducting “staff rides” at the New Market battlefield in order to educate the cadets on military tactics, and the significance of this battle to the Corps.

### **VMI Academic Curriculum**

- Including the U.S. Civil Rights movement (“American Civic Experience”) as part of a new core curriculum course to be required of all cadets. Syllabus encompasses key Supreme Court cases from the Civil Rights era, as well as essential Constitutional principles.
- Expanded search for a new chair in American Constitutional history (a privately-funded, fully endowed faculty position).
- Reviewing history elective coursework for revisions to focus and syllabus, including The Civil War and Reconstruction, History of the South from 1865, 19<sup>th</sup> Century South Africa, Africa in pre and modern times, the Old South and the African-American Experience.

### **Other DEI Coursework Components and Institute Resources**

- The Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force ROTC academic course include DEI components across a variety of forums and tools.
- In addition, the VMI commandant’s office, Title IX office, Department of

Human Resources, academic faculty, Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, and the Center for Leadership and Ethics are engaged in training and resource development.

- For example, VMI conducts focus groups to raise awareness around unconscious bias, designing role play and discussion points to build communication skills and understand microaggressions, creating self- assessment tools in advance of training to prepare for uncomfortable discussions, providing educational remedies to facilitate conflict resolution, and organizing reverse mentoring relationships to create awareness, opportunities for inclusion, and shared purpose.

### **Review and Enhancement of the Human Resources Diversity Hiring Program**

- To be adopted consistent with the goals of the *ONE Virginia Plan*, the SCHEV “Pathways to Opportunity: The Virginia Plan for Higher Education,” and the Virginia Department of Human Resource Management “Navigating Pathways to Workforce Excellence” plan.
- To be finalized concurrent with the hiring of VMI’s chief diversity officer.
- Expand advertising to increase diverse applicants (race, gender, veterans, and disabled).
- Revise training for hiring committee members, e.g., to address bias and discrimination.
- Include an equity coordinator on each hiring committee, and increase diversity in committee membership.
- Review hiring, onboarding, and orientation processes.
- Note increase in female full-time, tenure track faculty from 18% to 34% over last 10 years.
- Revise employee training, e.g., civility, diversity, discrimination, and bias in the workplace.

### **Enhanced Racial Sensitivity Training for Cadets, Faculty and Staff**

- A cadet-led cultural awareness training program is in development. The goal of this training is to enhance the Corps of Cadets’ understanding of cultural differences amongst members of the Corps and to promote civility and respect.
- The assistant commandant for cadet government has provided guidance to the cadets, and the program will be enhanced by the upcoming appointment of VMI’s chief diversity officer.
- Resources used in this program development include input from VMI alumni, the U.S. Department of Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, the VMI Alumni Association’s Diversity and Inclusion Committee, and ongoing focus groups with cadets, faculty and cadet leadership.
- In addition, cadet government organizations (Officer of the Guard Association and the Cadet Equity Association) implemented sensitivity/cultural awareness training in addition to punitive actions when applicable.

**Bystander Intervention Training/Culture**

- VMI fosters a culture of “see something, say something”. All cadets must complete bystander intervention training facilitated by the CEA at least twice per academic year.
- VMI also participates in the “Step Up” program developed by the University of Arizona, in partnership with the NCAA. Step Up is a prosocial behavior and bystander intervention program that educates students to be proactive in helping others.
- Cadets are able to anonymously report a crime or concern through VMI’s “Silent Witness” portal.

**Diversity Discussions and Seminars with VMI Alumni**

- Between June and December 2020, the Alumni Agencies held diversity discussions with alumni in response to the issues the nation was facing in the summer of 2020 following the George Floyd tragedy. The discussions were successful, with thirty to forty alumni participating in each session.
- In addition to these diversity discussions, the Agencies are hosting an Alumni Engagement Conference on July 22-24, 2021. One of the two keynote speakers at the conference will focus on diversity and inclusion as well as three of the eight breakout sessions planned.

**Established VMI Alumni Association Board of Directors DEI Subcommittee**

- This subcommittee represents racial diversity, gender diversity, religious diversity, and LGBTQ considerations. The subcommittee holds weekly meetings, which began in November 2020. The subcommittee authored and distributed engagement surveys to minority alumni.

**Supporting DEI Training Efforts**

- The Alumni Agencies’ DEI Subcommittee chairman works with the Commandant staff to support the Cadet Equity Association (CEA) and the Officer of the Guard Association (OGA).
- While the CEA and OGA are run by VMI and managed by the commandant’s office, the Agencies act in an advisory role to bring alumni in as appropriate.