



# BOARD OF VISITORS

201 SMITH HALL, LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA 24450-0304

## **2026 Annual Report to the Virginia General Assembly of the Virginia Military Institute Board of Visitors**

This report for calendar year 2025 constitutes the annual report for the Virginia Military Institute Board of Visitors. It is submitted to the General Assembly, governor, and made publicly available on the VMI Board of Visitors website in accordance with Va. Code § 23.1-1303. It provides an overview of board activities as is statutorily required. The VMI Board of Visitors is normally comprised of sixteen voting members appointed by the governor of the commonwealth. The adjutant general serves as a non-voting, ex-officio member of the board. However, during 2025, the board operated most of the year without its full complement of members due to the General Assembly's rejection of several members appointed by the governor.

During 2025, the VMI Board of Visitors addressed a number of issues within their oversight responsibilities. Chief among their activities was the decision to not renew the contract of the Institute's 15th superintendent and to conduct a search for and hire the next superintendent. The board also exercised their financial oversight through the enactment of the fiscal 2026 operating budget and 2025-26 tuition and fees. Other major items include the adoption of the Institute's six-year plan, changes to the board bylaws to reflect an updated committee structure, and election of board officers for 2025-2026. The board also approved 150 bachelor of arts degrees and 153 bachelor of science degrees awarded to the VMI Class of 2025 in May.

Regularly scheduled full board meetings were live streamed via the internet to provide real-time public access in accordance with State Council of Higher Education for Virginia guidelines. In the spirit of transparency, many committee meetings were also streamed. All streamed meetings are archived and publicly accessible. An archive of agendas and other supporting material for each board meeting, as well as email addresses allowing board members to receive public communications pertaining to board business, were prominently maintained on the Board of Visitors website. Following each full board meeting, detailed minutes were publicly posted on the board's website in accordance with Va. Code § 2.2-3707(H) and may be referenced for additional context beyond the scope of this report. All meetings were conducted pursuant to notice as required by Va. Code § 2.2-3707(C). VMI's legal counsel, from the Virginia Office of the Attorney General, was invited to attend all board meetings in accordance with Va. Code § 23.1-1303(B).

By the authority vested in me by the VMI Board of Visitors, this report is hereby tendered pursuant to Va. Code § 23.1-1303(B).

Jamie Inman '86  
President, VMI Board of Visitors



### 2026 Report of the VMI Board of Visitors

The following constitutes the board's annual report. A summary of major board actions and committee activities is included in this report.

1. **Board Membership:** Pursuant to Va. Code, VMI's Board of Visitors should consist of eight alumni residents of the commonwealth, four alumni who reside outside of the commonwealth, and four non-alumni residents of the commonwealth. The Virginia Adjutant General serves as a non-voting, ex-officio member of the board. Additionally, the first class president of the Corps of Cadets serves as the nonvoting, cadet advisory representative to the board. At the conclusion of 2025, the board's membership was as follows:

James P. Inman '86, president (alumnus, Virginia resident)  
C. Ernest Edgar IV '87 (alumnus, non-Virginia resident)  
Thomas E. Gottwald '83 (alumnus, Virginia resident)  
William R. Janis '84 (alumnus, non-Virginia resident)  
James G. Joustra '76 (alumnus, non-Virginia resident)  
Terence E. McKnight '78 (alumnus, Virginia resident)  
Meaghan Mobbs (non-alumnus, Virginia resident)  
Nancy W. Phillips (non-alumnus, Virginia resident)  
Kate Todd (non-alumnus, Virginia resident)  
Maj. Gen. James Ring '88 (Adjutant General)

In February, the General Assembly failed to confirm two members appointed in July 2024, Clifford Foster '93 and Quintin Elliot '85. Two new members, Jon Hartsock '00 and Stephen Reardon '84, were appointed by the governor in February. Tom Watjen '76 and John Adams '96 resigned from the Board of Visitors in March 2025 and April 2025 respectively. Jose Suarez '82 was appointed in April to fill Watjen's vacated seat. When the dust settled, the board had 15 voting members for their annual business meeting in May.

In June, the Virginia Senate Privileges and Elections Committee voted to reject the appointments of Hartsock, Reardon, and Suarez. Under advice of the Attorney General, Hartsock, Reardon, and Suarez continued to serve. The following month, a circuit court injunction barred the appointees from serving. In the meantime, Gov. Youngkin appointed Garrett Exner, Ernesto Sampson '98, Lloyd Taliaferro '95, and Jose Suarez '82 to four-year terms on the board. Scott Lingamfelter '73 was appointed to serve the remainder of John Adams' term which would expire in 2026. The Senate Privileges and Elections Committee met again in August rejecting Exner, Sampson, Taliaferro, Suarez, and Lingamfelter leaving the board with just nine voting members. The circuit court's injunction was upheld by the Virginia Supreme Court in December.

After Adams resignation, the Board of Visitors elected Thomas Gottwald to serve the remainder of Adams' term as president (through June 30, 2025). At its business meeting in May, the board elected James Inman to serve as president beginning July 1, 2025. The board also elected Thomas Gottwald, Kate Todd, and Ernie Edgar as vice presidents. Conrad Garcia was elected to serve as the non-alumni member of the Executive Committee. However, Garcia's term expired and he was not reappointed by the governor. The Executive Committee, acting on behalf of the board, elected Ernesto Sampson to serve as vice president and moved Kate Todd to the non-alumni member of the Executive



Committee. (This Executive Committee action was ratified by the full board at its September meeting.) Col. Bill Wyatt, executive officer to the superintendent, was elected to continue his service as secretary to the board.

2. **Board Member Orientation and Training:** Each summer, new VMI Board of Visitor appointees receive a day of orientation and training. However due to the Senate Privileges and Elections Committee's rejection of VMI's new board members, no new member orientation sessions were conducted by the VMI Board of Visitors. Board members Kate Todd, James Inman '86, Maj. Gen. James Ring '88, and Nancy Phillips attended the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) training held in November in accordance with Va. Code § 23.1-1304(A). With Kate Todd's attendance, all current board members have fulfilled their statutory obligation to attend within two years of their appointment.

During the course of the year, VMI legal counsel conducted training for members of the Board of Visitors and senior staff on Virginia's Freedom of Information Act and Conflict of Interest Act.

3. **Board Meetings:** During 2025, the VMI Board of Visitors met for three regularly scheduled meetings and three times for special meetings. The topics of the special meetings included considering the renewal of the superintendent's contract (February), electing a new board president (April), and soliciting feedback during the superintendent search process (August).

All board meetings were conducted pursuant to notice as required by Va. Code § 2.2-3707 (C). A quorum of board members was present at each meeting. A public meeting notice was issued when candidates for the vacant superintendent position visited post August 12-13 because three or more board members were in attendance where VMI business was being discussed. However, a meeting of board members did not take place, and no board business was conducted. The meeting in April was conducted virtually in accordance with Va. Code § 2.2-3708.3 (C).

During meetings, the board received briefings from the superintendent, dean of the faculty, deputy superintendent for Finance and Support, athletic director, commandant of cadets, assistant superintendent for Strategic Enrollment Management, and other senior staff members. Additionally, the CEO of the VMI Alumni Agencies provided relevant updates to the board. Leaders and representatives of the VMI Corps of Cadets, the first class president, regimental commander, and president of the VMI Honor court regularly briefed and engaged with the board. Representatives of the VMI Parents Council also briefed the board.

The board received public comment at their May board meeting in advance of their consideration of the FY2026 budget and academic year 2025-2026 tuition and fees in accordance with § 23.1-307 (D) of the Code of Virginia. The board also received public comment at their September meeting. The public comment at each meeting focused mostly on personnel and diversity issues.

4. **Board Actions for 2025:** The following is an overview of significant board attention and actions during the calendar year:

- a. The board approved all changes in faculty appointments, to include hiring, promotion, and retirement recognition actions for faculty and staff.



- b. The board approved the graduation lists for all cadets presented by the faculty as having met the requirements for graduation. The board also approved curricular changes proposed through the Academic Affairs Committee.
  - c. The board approved a number of VMI strategic and operational plans including the Institute's operating budget, the SWaM Plan for small, women, and minority-owned businesses, the Post Facilities Master Plan, and VMI's Six Year Plan.
  - d. At the February 6 – 8 meeting, the board received a briefing from the Institute's superintendent, Maj. Gen. Cedric Wins '85, and senior leaders which detailed key Institute events and activities including work in progress on VMI's reaccreditation process, affordability, recruitment and retention, good order and discipline, and athletics.
  - e. On February 28, the board held a special meeting where they voted to not renew the contract of the superintendent.
  - f. At a special meeting held virtually on April 16, the board convened to elect Teddy Gottwald '83 to serve as board president through June 30 after former board president John Adams '96 resigned from the board.
  - g. The board held their annual business meeting May 1 – 3. During this meeting, the board approved resolutions recognizing the service of several retiring or departing faculty and staff members. They also approved the graduation list, Jackson-Hope grants, changes to the Faculty Handbook, Academic Regulations, and curriculum, and approved delegations of authority. The board discussed and approved the FY 2026 operating budget and tuition and fees. A new slate of officers was also elected.
  - h. A public notice of a special board meeting was issued for Aug. 12 – 13. Board members were in attendance on post to attend meetings of faculty, staff, and cadets with candidates for the vacant superintendent position. No board business was conducted.
  - i. On August 15, the Board of Visitors convened in a special meeting to appoint Lt. Gen. David J. Furness '87 as the 16th superintendent of Virginia Military Institute.
  - j. The final regularly scheduled meeting of the year was held September 22 – 24. The board approved the graduation list, changes in the faculty, curricular changes, and a deferred compensation resolution allowing the new superintendent to participate in the Institute's deferred compensation plan. The board also approved the SWaM Plan, the Six Year Plan, and changes to the board bylaws.
5. **Committees:** The Board of Visitors began 2025 with 10 committees including the Executive Committee. In September, the board reduced the number of committees to eight by amending the bylaws and reorganizing committee responsibilities. Due to the small number of board members, each committee is comprised of a committee chairperson and 3-4 committee members. Each committee has an assigned VMI staff liaison. At the end of 2025, the standing committees of the board are as follows:



## BOARD OF VISITORS

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*Academic Affairs:* academic programs, course offerings, faculty employment and compensation, strategic enrollment management, cadet academic performance, Jackson-Hope, international programs, undergraduate research, career services, institutional effectiveness, accreditation.

*Audit, Finance, and Planning:* operating budget, tuition and fees, business and finance operations, audits, ARMICS, capital planning (in alignment with Advancement Committee), facilities management, six-year plan, museum system, SWaM, delegation of authority, auxiliary enterprises.

*Corps and Military Affairs:* cadet health and well-being, cadet activities and training, class and regimental systems, self-governance, good order and discipline, ROTC.

*Advancement:* VMI Alumni Agencies coordination and alignment, alumni relations, strategic communications and marketing, fundraising, officer and board nominations, Institute awards.

*Athletics:* athletic budget, NCAA athletics, rules, and regulations, Southern Conference.

*Operations and Personnel Affairs:* human resources, employee compensation, emergency management, Title IX, inspector general, post safety, information technology, VMI Police, inclusive excellence.

*Appeals:* policies and practices of the Honor Court, Honor Court appeals.

*Executive:* board governance (bylaws, committees, compliance, and Code of Ethics), strategic plan, board goals and objectives, management of superintendent, government relations.

6. **Conclusion:** The VMI Board of Visitors strives to be transparent and inclusive in their activity. Further detail of the board's discussions, actions, and activities are available within the minutes and recordings of respective meetings on the VMI Board of Visitors website. The board's meeting information for 2025 is available at <https://www.vmi.edu/about/governance/board-of-visitors/past-meetings/>. Meeting materials are archived at <https://www.vmi.edu/bovmaterials>. Additionally, video recordings of the full board meetings are archived on the VMI Board of Visitors YouTube page at <https://www.youtube.com/@VMI1839-BOV>.

Questions may be directed to the Board of Visitors secretary, Col. Bill Wyatt, at (540) 464-7132 or [bovsecretary@vmi.edu](mailto:bovsecretary@vmi.edu).