



BOARD OF VISITORS

201 SMITH HALL, LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA 24450-0304

Meeting Minutes Sept. 22 - 24, 2025

Several public meetings of the Virginia Military Institute Board of Visitors was held in Lexington, Virginia on September 22 - 24, 2025, pursuant to public notice. All meeting materials referenced are publicly available at <https://www.vmi.edu/bovmaterials>.

Board of Visitors Members Present

Ernie Edgar '87	Meaghan Mobbs
Teddy Gottwald '83	Nancy Phillips
Jamie Inman '86	Kate Todd
Jim Joustra '76	Maj. Gen. James Ring '88
Terry McKnight '78	

Board of Visitors Members Not Present

Bill Janis '84 (excused)

Others Present

Lt. Gen. David Furness '87, Superintendent
Col. Bill Wyatt, Board of Visitors Secretary
Patrick O'Leary '90, Senior Asst. Attorney General

Monday, September 22, 2025

The Appeals, Advancement, Athletics, Operations and Personnel Affairs, Nominating and Governance, and Executive Committees held public meetings beginning at 1 p.m.

Tuesday, September 23, 2025

The full board met at 8 a.m. in the Turman Room of the Preston Library for the Superintendent's Agenda Items session.

1. Board president, Jamie Inman, presided and called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m. The meeting was streamed live and is archived on the VMI Board of Visitors YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c7AMq59F2sQ>.
2. The board president welcomed Lt. Gen. David Furness as the 16th superintendent of the Virginia Military Institute.



3. The superintendent mentioned he has only been in the position for one week. He said he has been very pleased thus far with the cadets as well as the Alumni Agencies and Smith Hall staff. He said all three legs of the three-legged stool appear to be doing the right thing and are focused on the right things.
4. Brig. Gen. Dallas Clark '99, deputy superintendent for Finance and Support and who served as acting superintendent between June 1 and Sept. 14, 2025, provided a brief update on the Institute's summer activities. He highlighted the Summer Undergraduate Research Institute, study abroad programs, the Summer Undergraduate Entrepreneurship Program, Summer Transition Program, COW Program, and cadet participation in the U.S. Army 250th anniversary.

Clark also discussed summer construction projects and the coordination that goes into these projects. He highlighted projects related to the Crozet Hall scullery and freezer, expansion of the barber shop, barracks windows, New Barracks Courtyard, and the postwide safety and security project.

5. Brig. Gen. Robert Moreschi, dean of the faculty and deputy superintendent for Academics, provided an update on academic performance. He highlighted a cumulative grade point average for the Corps of Cadets of 2.911. He also discussed the Cadet Academic Recovery Program which requires cadets on academic probation to work with the Miller Academic Center until the cadet earns their way off academic probation. Moreschi discussed changes to the CAR program that included more individualized requirements and introduction of optional modules.

Teddy Gottwald praised the dean pointing out the Institute's drop in enrollment several years ago coupled with an increased acceptance rate could have caused problems academically, but the Institute appears to have prepared for it and the data suggests efforts are working.

6. The dean also discussed the SACSCOC reaffirmation process. He said the Institutional Effectiveness staff is entrenched in compiling information for VMI's submission which will be submitted to a consultant to review prior to submission to the SACSCOC offsite committee.

VMI will submit a Quality Enhancement Plan that is focused on experiential learning through study abroad, internship, and/or undergraduate research opportunities. The QEP, which is not required, will be submitted along with the Institute's reaffirmation materials.

7. Col. Shannon Eskam, assistant superintendent for Strategic Enrollment Management and director of Financial Aid, briefed the board on current recruitment, retention, and financial



aid efforts. Specifically, she mentioned changes to financial aid as a result of the One Big Beautiful Bill passed into law by Congress which limits Parents Plus Loans. This will cause challenges in the future for some cadets and their families.

Eskam briefed the status of the recruiting landscape including the shrinking market as a result of the demographic enrollment cliff, fewer ROTC scholarships available, and changes to financial aid under the One Big Beautiful Bill.

8. Lt. Col. Joe Hagy, director of Admissions, briefed the board on the 2024-25 recruiting cycle which matriculated 471 rats. He said VMI received 2,346 applications, the highest number of applications ever received. Hagy reviewed the 2026+3 class profile with the board which includes, among other statistics, an average high school GPA for first time freshmen of 3.6, 62% in-state vs. 38% out of state, 16% female, 33% NCAA athletes, and a 52% to 48% liberal arts to STEM ratio.

Hagy also discussed data related to summer melt. VMI had 97 cancellations and medical disqualifications among those who had paid deposits. The top three cancellation reasons were 1.) tuition too high; 2.) attending another federal service academy / senior military college / ROTC program; or 3.) enlisting. He said both cancellations and medical disqualifications were historically high as well as the number of rat cadet-athletes was 22 less than the previous year. The loss of 20 Army ROTC 3-year scholarships also contributed to the lower matriculation numbers this year.

Hagy briefed a number of recruiting adjustments for the coming recruiting cycle. These adjustments include the possible expansion of the Call to Duty program, shifting a regional recruiter to Richmond and Central Virginia, addressing losses in Virginia through lead generation, and working with the Alumni Agencies' Outreach Committee to engage alumni to assist with recruiting and yield.

9. Brig. Gen. Dallas Clark provided a budget update. He said the FY 26 budget faces a number of challenges including holding tuition flat, investments in Athletics, reduced enrollment, and VMSDEP waivers. Clark explained the budget faces a \$3.4 million shortfall and provided a roadmap on how to close the deficit. Budget reduction solutions include vacancy savings and operational reductions.

Clark also briefed the board on government relations efforts. He provided key dates for the upcoming 2026 General Assembly session, mentioned the annual VMI Legislative Reception and coordinated cadet legislative visits, and key themes to expect the General Assembly to take up. Clark also highlighted the Institute's budget requests including VMSDEP and base funding, mission readiness facilities, and QEP funding.



10. Col. Ley Havird '90, commandant of the Corps of Cadets, briefed the board on cadet discipline from the spring 2025 semester. He showed average demerits declined from 33.26 demerits in the fall 2024 semester to 19.76 demerits for the spring 2025 semester. The number of cadets exceeding 75 demerits declined from 5.1% to 3.8% and those with 100 demerits or more declined from 2.8% to 1.6%.

Havird said as of Sept. 17, the attrition rate among rats was 5.9%. 53 rats were seen at the New Cadet Retention Center where only 14 (26.4%) departed. 396 rats were treated by Post Hospital for 510 medical issues. This was a 7.9% increase from the previous year. This suggests the Institute needs to do a better job preparing prospective cadets for the rigors of the Rat Line.

The commandant also discussed the implementation of a new fitness program for the Corps of Cadets. The program requires all cadets to pass a fitness test. The program requires those who cannot pass their specific fitness test to meet certain individualized fitness goals. Failure to do so will result in the cadet being placed on fitness probation. The program will be fully implemented in Spring 2026.

11. Jamaal Walton '07, director of Athletics, gave an overview of the FY 25 Athletic budget. He also discussed the FY 26 budget which will focus on generating new revenues, reducing expenses, and raising new private funding.

Walton gave an overview of the House v. NCAA settlement effects on VMI. He said VMI opted out of the settlement for 2025-26, but a working group is studying the issue to determine whether the Institute should opt in or opt out for 2026-27. The settlement has an impact on roster limits, revenue sharing for cadet-athletes, and compliance costs.

Finally, Walton unveiled a new "Moe" logo and discussed the significance behind the design.

12. The board president thanked the Institute staff and recognized how hard they were working. He encouraged everyone to review the board's vision statement that was issued over the summer and pointed out it meshes very well with Lt. Gen. Furness' guidance to cadets, faculty, and staff.
13. The meeting adjourned at 9:53 a.m.



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The Academic Affairs, Audit, Finance, and Planning, and Corps and Military Affairs committees met beginning at 10:40 a.m. The board concluded the day with a tour of recently completed and ongoing construction projects.

Wednesday, September 24, 2025

The full board met for a business meeting beginning at 8 a.m. in the Turman Room of Preston Library on the VMI post in Lexington, Virginia.

1. Jamie Inman, board president called the meeting order at 8 a.m. The meeting was streamed lived and is archived on the VMI Board of Visitors YouTube channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-FdjHsvHR3E>.

Inman introduced the public comment portion of the meeting. He explained the board was reinstituting a public comment period at each regularly scheduled board meeting in the spirit of transparency and openness. He explained each person would have three minutes to speak.

Those participating in public comment were called by the board secretary in the order they signed up. The following individuals were present and provided public comment to the board:

- a. Robert Morris '79
- b. John Reid

Two individuals submitted written comments to the board for their consideration. Those comments are publicly available in the Sept. 24, 2025, Full Board Meeting at <https://www.vmi.edu/bovmaterials>.

2. Next, the regimental commander, first class president, and Honor Court president were given an opportunity to address the Board of Visitors. The Class of 2026 cadet leadership includes:
 - a. RCO: Devin Auzenne, a history major from Opelousas, Louisiana
 - b. First Class President: Maximus Ankrah, a biology major from Dumfries, Virginia
 - c. Honor Court President: Grant Rose, an economics and business major from Virginia Beach, Virginia
3. The board president called upon Phaedra Link, president of the VMI Parents Council, to provide an update on the council's activities for 2025-26.



4. David Prasnicki, CEO of the VMI Alumni Agencies, briefed the board on the state of the agencies. He discussed leadership changes to the various agency boards, key dates during the fall semester, a new five-year strategic plan, marketing campaign, a review of alumni engagements since the last time the board met in May 2025, and a summary of FY25 giving.
5. A motion was made by Ernie Edgar and seconded by Kate Todd to approve the items on the consent calendar. The motion passed unanimously. The following items were adopted:
 - a. Ratification of Executive Committee action moving Kate Todd to role of non-alumni Executive Committee member from vice-president
 - b. Ratification of Executive Committee action to increase the athletic budget subsidy to \$1 million from \$750,000 based on FY27 projections that show an operating deficit of \$500,000 or less
 - c. Approval of graduation list
 - d. Approval of changes in the faculty
 - e. Approval of curricular changes
 - f. Approval of deferred compensation resolution adding Lt. Gen. David Furness to the Institute's deferred compensation plan
6. Nancy Phillips, chair of the Academic Affairs Committee, provided a report on the committee's discussions from their last meeting. The committee discussed the current state of academic majors, math standards, the Miller Academic Center, Peay Scholars program, faculty salaries and the role of faculty chairs, Pell-eligible enrollment, and research being conducted about the role of standardized testing in admissions. The committee also received an update from the VMI Museum System.
7. Teddy Gottwald '83, chair of the Athletics Committee, said the committee discussed the athletic budget which included a deficit that came in higher than anticipated. Efforts to mitigate the deficit in the future were also discussed. The committee talked about the House settlement, the Athletics operation plan, additional revenue generation opportunities, recently hired head coaches in lacrosse and cross country, and conference realignment for the swimming and diving team.
8. Terry McKnight '78, chair of the Audit, Finance, and Planning Committee, made a motion to adopt the Institute's six year plan. The motion was seconded by Teddy Gottwald. The motion passed unanimously.
9. McKnight said the AF&P Committee discussed the operating budget and its challenges. The committee's biggest concern is rebuilding relationships in Richmond. He told the board the VMSDEP program is also a big challenge for the Institute. The committee discussed strategies for reducing operating costs and expressed their desire that any cuts be "on the fringes" so as to not negatively impact the cadet experience. The committee received



briefings from Auxiliary Services and Facilities Management.

The committee reviewed previous audit findings which have been addressed.

10. McKnight made a motion to adopt the Institute's 2025-26 SWaM Plan. The motion was seconded by Nancy Phillips. The motion passed unanimously.
11. Jim Joustra '76, chair of the Corps and Military Affairs Committee, provided an update on their committee meeting. He said the committee heard updates from the various ROTC units, cadet regimental staff, health and wellness staff, the chaplain, and the commandant. They heard an update on discipline and standards, physical training, and a mentorship program.
12. Kate Todd, chair of the Operations Personnel Affairs Committee, told the board the committee discussed issues of compliance, inspector general and Title IX trends, updates on post operations including emergency management and VMI Police. The committee also received a briefing on the VMI workforce.
13. Ernie Edgar, chair of the Advancement Committee, provided an update on the new committee's activities. He said the committee reviewed the committee's charter and heard briefings on the VMI Alumni Agencies, Communications and Marketing, and the regimental S5 activities. The committee also discussed the state of various board awards.
14. Terry McKnight, chair of the Appeals Committee, said the committee heard from cadet members of the Honor Court. The committee also met with the new superintendent's Honor Court representatives. Over the summer, the committee also considered an appeal from a former cadet. McKnight said the appeal was given strong consideration, but in the end, the appeal was denied.
15. Teddy Gottwald, chair of the Nominating and Governance Committee, said the committee reviewed proposed bylaw changes. The revisions include changes to be in compliance with state code, clarifications of historical practices, and updating the committee structures and responsibilities.
16. Jamie Inman, board president, asked for a motion to adopt the bylaw changes. The Executive Committee recommended one edit to the proposed changes. The edit adds "Inclusive Excellence" to the areas of oversight of the Operations and Personnel Committee. Ernie Edgar moved the adoption of the proposed bylaw changes with the Inclusive Excellence change. The motion was seconded by Teddy Gottwald. The motion passed unanimously and the bylaw changes are enacted.



17. Ernie Edgar, chair of the Superintendent Search Committee, gave a final update on the committee's activities. He pointed out, with Lt. Gen. Furness' presence as 16th superintendent, the committee fulfilled its mission. Edgar thanked all those involved and recognized the time that was invested by the committee members. He said the search firm, Buffkin Baker, was instrumental in helping getting to the final decision. Edgar thanked all those candidates who stepped forward to be considered for the position.

Kate Todd added the community input into the process was very good echoing the search firm's comment they've never seen so much participation outside of the search committee. Jim Joustra also lauded the process and noted it was as good as he's seen in his career.

18. A motion was made by Ernie Edgar and seconded by Terry McKnight to enter closed session. The motion passed unanimously, and the board entered closed session at 9:36 a.m. to discuss:
- a. Disciplinary and other matters that would involve disclosure of information contained in the scholastic records of specific cadets, pursuant to Va. Code Section 2.2-3711 (A) (2), relating to discipline, sexual assault, and Honor Court cases.
 - b. Consultation with legal counsel regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel pursuant to Va. Code Section 2.2-3711 (A) (7), pertaining to actual or probable litigation of the Institute.
 - c. Consultation with legal counsel regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel pursuant to Va. Code Section 2.2-3711 (A) (8).
19. A motion was made by Ernie Edgar and seconded by Meaghan Mobbs to certify the closed session. A roll call vote of the members present was taken. All members present voted to certify the closed session and the board returned to open session at 11:10 a.m.
20. There being no further business, Ernie Edgar made a motion seconded by Meaghan Mobbs to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously and the board adjourned at 11:12 a.m.