



BOARD OF VISITORS

201 SMITH HALL, LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA 24450-0304

Meeting Minutes January 29 - 31, 2026

Several public meetings of the Virginia Military Institute Board of Visitors were held in Lexington, Virginia on January 29 - 31, 2026, pursuant to public notice. All meeting materials referenced are publicly available at <https://www.vmi.edu/bovmaterials>.

Thursday, January 29, 2026

New Member Orientation

Board of Visitors members present:

Col. Michael Dick '77	Lester Johnson '95
Don Hall	Gov. Ralph Northam '81
Col. Jamie Inman '86	Kate Todd
Del. Bill Janis '84	Damon Williams '90

Others present:

Gen. John Jumper '66, Chair, State Council of Higher Education for Virginia
LtGen David Furness '87, Superintendent
Brig. Gen. Robert Moreschi, Dean of the Faculty
Col. Travis Homiak '95, Chief of Staff
Col. Ley Havird '90, Commandant
Col. Shannon Eskam, Assistant Superintendent for Strategic Enrollment Management
Jamaal Walton '07, Director of Athletics
Jeff Lawhorne, Director of Finance and Budget
Col. Bill Wyatt, Board of Visitors Secretary
Nathan Moberley, Higher Education Section Chief, Office of Attorney General

The new member orientation began at 9 a.m. in the boardroom of Smith Hall on post at Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Va.

Col. Inman, board president, welcomed the new members and discussed the board's direction statement issued in July 2025. Gen. John Jumper, chair of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, briefed new board members on the role of SCHEV and questions board members should be asking in their oversight role.

The board received briefings from each of the Institute's senior leaders in the areas of academics, finance and support, strategic enrollment management, cadet and military affairs, athletics, and VMI organization. Briefings are publicly available at <https://www.vmi.edu/bovmaterials>.



The meeting concluded at 11:30 a.m.

The Appeals and Advancement Committees held public meetings beginning at 1 p.m. The Athletics and Operations and Personnel Affairs Committees held public meetings beginning at 2:30 p.m.

Executive Committee

Board of Visitors members present:

Ernie Edgar '87	Gov. Ralph Northam '81
Teddy Gottwald '83	Kate Todd
Col. Jamie Inman '86	Damon Williams '90
Rear Adm. Terry McKnight '78	

Others present:

Lt. Gen David Furness '87, Superintendent
Col. Travis Homiak '95, Chief of Staff
Col. Bill Wyatt, Board of Visitors Secretary
Nathan Moberley, Office of Attorney General

The meeting of the VMI Board of Visitors Executive Committee convened at 4:01 p.m. LtGen Furness gave a brief summary of recent government relations activities. At 4:05 p.m. the Executive Committee moved into closed session to discuss:

1. 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.
2. Matters related to the employment, assignment, appointment, or performance of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of the public body, and evaluation of performance of departments or schools of public institutions of higher education pursuant to Va. Code Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1), relating to review of the Superintendent's performance objectives.
3. 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.



4. 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).

A motion was made by Ernie Edgar and seconded by Teddy Gottwald 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 Executive Committee returned to open session at 4:11 p.m.

Mr. Gottwald notified the Executive Committee the full board would be considering an NIL policy. The Athletics Committee will review it, but he encouraged Executive Committee members to review the policy before Saturday. Rear Adm. McKnight encouraged the Executive Committee members to review the Audit, Finance, and Planning Committee's motions as well.

Ernie Edgar made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Kate Todd. The motion passed and the Executive Committee adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Friday, January 30, 2026

Superintendent's Agenda Items

Board of Visitors members present:

Col. Michael Dick '77	Rear Adm. Terry McKnight '78
Ernie Edgar '87	Dr. Meaghan Mobbs
Teddy Gottwald '83	Gov. Ralph Northam '81
Don Hall	Nancy Phillips
Col. Jamie Inman '86	Kate Todd
Del. Bill Janis '84	Damon Williams
Lester Johnson '95	Maj. Gen. James Ring '88
Lt. Col. Jim Joustra '76	

Others present:

Lt. Gen David Furness '87, Superintendent
Col. Bill Wyatt, Board of Visitors Secretary
Nathan Moberley, Office of Attorney General

The full Board of Visitors convened on Friday, January 30, 2026, at 8 a.m. Col. Inman called the meeting to order, welcomed new members, and recognized LtGen David Furness '87, VMI's superintendent. The meeting was streamed live in accordance with SCHEV guidelines and the recording is publicly available at <https://www.youtube.com/live/q4SC1YFJITM>. Presentations used during this meeting are also publicly available at <https://www.vmi.edu/bovmaterials>.



LtGen Furness provided the board with a 120-day assessment of the state of the Institute. He said leadership development efforts, mission alignment, and the academic and military training are in good shape. Areas that need to improve but aren't broken include cadet recruitment and retention, strategic communication, and standards enforcement. Finally, LtGen Furness said he would be focusing on several areas that need significant improvement including efforts to increase the competitiveness of VMI Athletics and building relationships with legislators and government officials.

The superintendent also gave the board an in-process review of efforts to revise the Institute's strategic plan. He told the board his revision of the plan is not a wholesale rewrite, but rather a revision. He said the plan builds off Vision 2039 and Forging 21st Century Leaders and creates more measurable goals and objectives. The plan will consolidate the Institute's core values and mission statement so that both are memorable. The strategic initiatives in the plan will more accurately reflect the three-legged stool and resonate with cadets.

Col. Shannon Eskam gave an update on strategic enrollment updates. She discussed impacts of the federal One Big Beautiful Bill on VMI and shared an update on several retention and communications systems implementation.

Lt. Col. Joe Hagy shared the weekly admissions report which shows deposits and reservations for the future Class of 2030 ahead of last year and running at a rate similar to the Class of 2028. He said deposits from female applicants constitute 24% of deposits which is exceptionally high. He would like to see deposits from out-of-state applicants be higher at this point. He shared data regarding where applications are coming from that allows the Admissions staff to target areas that might be lagging behind. Hagy also gave an overview of yield activities.

Brig. Gen. Robert Moreschi, Dean of the Faculty, shared information regarding academic performance of the rat class for the Fall 2025 semester. He said rat academic performance is on par with previous years. He gave an overview of the Cadet Academic Recovery (CAR) Program and academic probation. The dean also provided a status update on the Institute's SACSCOC reaffirmation process. The Academic Board is also considering changes that would allow 5th year cadets to take a less than full time load during their last semester at VMI.

Lt. Col. Ahmad Sheikh, director of Career Services, briefed the board on the results of the office's first destinations survey. He said the Class of 2025 was employed or in graduate school at a rate of 96% within five months of graduation. He shared a list of notable employers and graduate schools where Class of 2025 alumni are now.

Brig. Gen. Dallas Clark '99, deputy superintendent for Finance and Support, set the stage for the FY27 operating budget sharing state and private funding assumptions as well as expected expenses for the coming fiscal year. He briefed the status of the Institute's legislative requests.



Col. Ley Havird '90, Commandant, provided the board with an update on the Corps' Fall 2025 conduct. He shared details about average demerits and showed a downward trend over the past several years. He also briefed the implementation of the new Fitness Improvement Program and Officer in Charge Midnight Inspection (OCMNI) checks.

Jamaal Walton '07, Athletic Director, gave the board an update on the Athletic budget, the NCAA House Settlement and "opting in" implementation, building a winning culture within the Athletic department, and personnel updates. There was some discussion about whether athletes who are recruited to VMI actually know about the VMI experience before they arrive at the Institute.

Finally, Teddy Gottwald passed out copies of The Cadet newspaper praising the newspaper for its coverage of the governor's inauguration. Lester Johnson was disheartened by the inaccuracies contained within the article about his appointment to the board and disappointed with the characterization that the contributions of his previous four years of service on the board were all about diversity, equity, and inclusion issues.

The board adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

The Academic Affairs Committee convened for a meeting at 10:45 a.m.

Working Lunch

Board of Visitors members present:

Col. Michael Dick '77	Rear Adm. Terry McKnight '78
Ernie Edgar '87	Dr. Meaghan Mobbs
Teddy Gottwald '83	Gov. Ralph Northam '81
Don Hall	Nancy Phillips
Col. Jamie Inman '86	Kate Todd
Del. Bill Janis '84	Damon Williams
Lester Johnson '95	Maj. Gen. James Ring '88
Lt. Col. Jim Joustra '76	

The board convened at 12:30 p.m. for a working lunch where they received a talk from VMI head football coach, Ashley Ingram, about his vision for the football program. The lunch was streamed live in accordance with state guidelines and is archived at <https://www.youtube.com/live/j-LxFMpPFNs>.



The board adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

The Audit Finance and Planning Committee and Corps and Military Affairs Committee convened for a meetings at 1:30 p.m. Board members visited several academic departments beginning at 3:15 p.m.

Saturday, January 31, 2026

Board of Visitors members present:

Col. Michael Dick '77	Rear Adm. Terry McKnight '78
Ernie Edgar '87	Dr. Meaghan Mobbs
Teddy Gottwald '83	Nancy Phillips
Don Hall	Maj. Gen. James Ring '88
Col. Jamie Inman '86	
Del. Bill Janis '84	
Lester Johnson '95	
Lt. Col. Jim Joustra '76	

Board of Visitors members participating virtually:

Gov. Ralph Northam '81 (from Norfolk, Va., more than 60 miles)
Kate Todd (from McLean, Va., more than 60 miles)
Damon Williams (from Charleston, SC, personal reasons)

Others present:

Lt. Gen David Furness '87, Superintendent
Col. Bill Wyatt, Board of Visitors Secretary
Nathan Moberley, Office of Attorney General

1. The full board met for a business meeting beginning at 8 a.m. in the Turman Room of Preson Library in Lexington, Va. In accordance with state guidelines, the meeting was streamed live and is archived at <https://www.youtube.com/live/QupG6-ffLK4>. All materials for the business meeting are available at <https://www.vmi.edu/bovmaterials>.
2. Col. Inman called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.
3. The regimental commander, first class president, and Honor Court president provided an update to the board. The Class of 2026 cadet leadership includes:
 - a. RCO: Devin Auzenne, a history major from Opelousas, La.
 - b. First Class President: Maximus Ankrah, a biology major from Dumfries, Va.



- c. Honor Court President: Grant Rose, an economics and business major from Virginia Beach
4. David Prasnicki, CEO of the VMI Alumni Agencies, gave a brief overview of the VMIAA organization for the benefit of the new board members. He then provided an update on fundraising showing an increase in dollars raised and number of donors. Prasnicki shared an overview of efforts to introduce the new superintendent to alumni over the past six months.
5. At this time, the board paused to recognize Prasnicki's 40 years of service to VMI. Prasnicki will retire this spring. He was presented with a resolution and the VMI Achievement Medal.
6. ***A motion was made by Ernie Edgar and seconded by Terry McKnight to adopt the items on the consent calendar. The motion passed unanimously.*** The following items were adopted:
 - a. Approval of September 2025 meeting minutes
 - b. Approval of the following resolutions:
 - i. Faculty emeritus status for Col. Wade Bell
 - ii. VMI Achievement Medal for David Prasnicki
 - iii. Resolutions of appreciation for members of the Superintendent Search Committee
 - c. Approval of the changes in faculty
 - d. Approval of the graduation list
 - e. Approval of the changes to the Faculty Handbook
 - f. Approval of Academic Regulations
 - g. Approval of curricular changes
 - h. Approval of recommended entrance rate guidelines for academic salaries for the 2026-27 academic year
 - i. Approval of academic standards
 - j. Approval of amendments to FY26 operating budget
 - k. Approval of VMI Post Facilities Master Plan for 2026
 - l. Approval of delegation of contractual authority
 - m. Approval of property acquisition (8 & 10 Massey St.)
7. For the purposes of the Institute's reaccreditation, the board considered the Institute's current mission statement. A motion was made by Ernie Edgar and seconded by Bill Janis to reaffirm the mission statement in its current form. The motion passed unanimously and the mission statement is reaffirmed.
8. Nancy Phillips provided a report on the Academic Affairs Committee meeting. In addition to the items on the consent calendar, the committee discussed the Institute's Quality Enhancement Plan, summer 2025 internship survey, new majors in Computer Information



Systems and Human Performance and Wellness, artificial intelligence, standardized testing, and Academic Board agenda items for Spring 2026.

9. Teddy Gottwald, chair of the Athletics Committee, provided an update on the committee meeting held the day before. The committee discussed the athletic budget, the Value Makes Impact strategic plan, the new football coach, and received an academic and conduct update. The committee also discussed the House Settlement and a proposed name, image, and likeness policy.

A motion was made to adopt the proposed NIL policy by Bill Janis and seconded by Ernie Edgar. The motion passed unanimously.

10. Terry McKnight, chair of the Audit, Finance, and Planning Committee, reported on the committee's discussions which, in addition to the consent calendar items, included FY26 budget performance, payment card data security, Auxiliary Services, the VMI Museum System, and Facilities Management.
11. Jim Joustra, chair of the Corps and Military Affairs Committee, provided an update on the committee's meeting. The committee heard updates on the General Committee and regimental systems. They discussed cadet health and well-being, Inclusive Excellence, and heard an update on rat attrition, discipline, grooming standards, and fitness.
12. The Operations and Personnel Committee met on Thursday. The committee chair, Kate Todd, provided a report. The committee discussed emergency management efforts including the new post barrier system and received a brief on the Institute's explosive detecting canines as well as VMI Police outreach and engagement efforts.
13. Ernie Edgar, chair of the Advancement Committee, reported on committee discussions. He said the committee received a report from the S5 captain on their fall activities, heard about strategic marketing results and activities, discussed strategic fundraising and alumni relations, and strategized 2026 Board of Visitors nominations.

Further, the Advancement Committee nominates Damon Williams to fill the vacant Board of Visitors vice president position. A voice vote was taken and Williams was elected to serve as vice president.

14. Terry McKnight, chair of the Appeals Committee, provided a summary of the Appeals Committee meeting which included a review of the Honor Court appeals process and an update on Honor Court cases and trends. The committee also received a tour of the Honor Court facilities.



15. A motion was made by Ernie Edgar and seconded by Bill Janis to enter closed session. The motion passed unanimously, and the board entered closed session at 9:31 a.m. to discuss:

- a. Matters related to the employment, assignment, appointment, or performance of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of the public body, and evaluation of performance of departments or schools of public institutions of higher education pursuant to Va. Code Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1), relating to the evaluation of the Superintendent's performance and discussion of individual personnel matters.
- b. 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.
- c. Discussion or consideration by governing boards of public institutions of higher education of matters relating to gifts, bequests and fund-raising activities, and of grants and contracts for services or work to be performed by such institution, pursuant to Va. Code Section 2.2-3711 (A) (9) relating to consulting for specific PR matters and messaging by the institute and related fundraising.
- d. 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.
- e. 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).

16. A motion was made by Ernie Edgar and seconded by Jim Joustra to exit closed session at 10:16 a.m. The motion passed unanimously.

17. A motion was made by Ernie Edgar and seconded by Bill Janis to certify the closed session. A roll call vote of the members present was taken. All members present voted to certify the closed session. Damon Williams did not participate in the closed session.

18. Col. Inman expressed appreciation to the cadets, alumni, parents, and friends who have advocated to the General Assembly on behalf of the Institute.

19. There being no further business, Ernie Edgar, seconded by Col. Dick, made a motion to adjourn and the board adjourned at 10:25.