

VMI Inclusive Excellence

One Virginia Strategic Plan



1 August 2021

**Office of the Superintendent
Virginia Military Institute
Lexington, Virginia 24450**

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Executive Summary

The VMI Board of Visitors directed VMI to develop a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Recruitment Plan in October 2020. Development of this plan will require additional study, input, and review before finalization. This document represents an initial framework for initiating discussions and formalizing goals, objectives, and metrics to measure progress. The Plan will focus on five major goals:

1. Achieve and maintain a more diverse and inclusive student body, faculty, staff, and administration.
2. Create and sustain an organizational environment that affirms and represents diversity and employs inclusive practices throughout its daily operations.
3. Engage students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the community in learning varied perspectives of domestic and international diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice. Create and sustain an organizational environment that affirms and respects diversity and employs inclusive practices throughout its daily operations.
4. Create and sustain an institutional infrastructure that effectively supports progress and accountability in achieving DE&I goals.
5. Community Engagement: leveraging institutional philanthropy and community partnerships to create collective impact with other community organizations.

VMI will consider input from other state agencies and guidance from the following publications in developing the Plan:

1. The ONE Virginia Plan (Many Virginians: One Commonwealth)
2. State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) revised and updated “Pathways to Opportunity: The Virginia Plan for Higher Education.”
3. The Virginia Department of Human Resource Management “Navigating Pathways to Workforce Excellence.”

Strategic Framework

In response to social unrest across the country, the need for diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) has moved to the top of the agenda for many institutions. However, in order to make a lasting commitment to DE&I, institutions must move beyond a contemporaneous response to social unrest and take steps to implement a lasting institutional commitment to creating an inclusive environment. Advancing the agenda of DE&I extends beyond simply inviting members of underrepresented communities into VMI, it requires careful consideration of VMI's mission, unique military structure, and strategic policy to formulate a true strategic plan. The goal of this plan is to produce institutional transformation through a program known as Inclusive Excellence. The plan will draw on VMI's solid foundation of accountability, honor, integrity, and respect.

Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) uses *inclusive excellence* to guide colleges and universities when incorporating diversity, equity, and educational quality. *Inclusive excellence* features four tenets;

1. Achieving educational equity in an inclusive, accepting setting.
2. Learning the skills, information, and mindsets students need to impact a diverse society.
3. Building a climate in classrooms and on the post that supports all students
4. Fostering learning opportunities that accept diversity is a benefit to problem-solving.

Johns Hopkins University Press notes, "Daryl G. Smith has devoted her career to studying and fostering diversity in higher education. In "Diversity's Promise for Higher Education," Smith brings together research from a wide variety of fields to propose a set of clear and realistic practices that will help colleges and universities locate diversity as a strategic imperative..." Daryl Smith (2020) notes that educational institutions must see the work of DE&I as central to their job. Additionally, Smith advises colleges and universities that want real institutional change to see diversity as essential for their mission and not just as a value. Lastly, Smith (2020) notes that diversity connects to enhanced leadership, positive transformation, student success, accountability, and more equitable hiring practices.

What is Diversity?

Understanding the uniqueness of each person based on a collection of human attributes, cultures, traditions, learning styles, etc. As an institution of higher education with a military foundation we also adopt the definition of diversity from the Military Leadership Diversity Commission- Diversity is recognizing, appreciating, respecting, and utilizing various human attributes. Diversity creates performance advantages through the synergy of diverse ideas. The following are the most common individual differences referenced when assessing diversity;

- Age
- Ethnicity
- Gender/Gender Identity
- Physical Ability
- Race
- Religion/Spiritual Beliefs
- Sexual Orientation
- Socio-Economic Status

What is Equity?

Equity refers to fairness and justice and is distinguished from equality: Whereas equality means providing the same to all, equity means recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and make adjustments to address historical and existing discrimination. Inequities happen when unfair or biased practices, policies, or situations contribute to a lack of equality. Equity must permeate all practices, policies, and procedures for every constituent.

What is Inclusion?

Inclusion means valuing all members of a community. Inclusion is manifested by bringing traditionally excluded individuals and groups into activities, policies and decision-making processes in a fashion that shares power, privilege, and affirms one's culture. The result of inclusion is an institution that promotes belonging and values knowledge of all people.

Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

To be the premier small college in the nation, unequalled in producing educated and honorable citizen-leaders, with an international reputation for academic excellence supported by a unique commitment to character development, self-discipline and physical challenge, conducted in a military environment.

Mission

The Virginia Military Institute believes that the measure of a college lies in the quality and performance of its graduates and their contributions to society. Therefore, it is the mission of the Virginia Military Institute to produce educated, honorable men and women, prepared for the varied work of civil life, imbued with love of learning, confident in the functions and attitudes of leadership, possessing a high sense of public service, advocates of the American Democracy and free enterprise system, and ready as citizen-soldiers to defend their country in time of national peril.

Values

Members of the Virginia Military Institute community are committed to the highest ethical standards in furtherance of our mission. Our policies and procedures provide guidance for the application of the ethical values stated below in our daily lives and work as members of this community.

We are committed to:

Honor:

We will support the Cadet Honor System.

Integrity:

We will conduct ourselves with integrity in our dealings with and on behalf of the Institute.

Accountability:

We will be accountable as individuals and as members of this community for our ethical conduct and for compliance with applicable laws and Institute policies and procedures.

Respect:

We will respect the rights and dignity of others.

Goal 1: Access and Success

Achieve and maintain a more diverse and inclusive student body, faculty, staff, and administration

Objective 1

Achieve increased student enrollment from historically underrepresented and underserved populations.

Tasks

1. Implement new gateway initiatives to make VMI a preferred destination for students from underrepresented and underserved populations. (Director of Admissions, Chief Diversity Officer)
2. Increase diversity of student populations by increasing financial aid. (Director of Financial Aid)
3. Conduct recruiting activities at locations targeting underrepresented populations. (Director of Admissions)
4. Involve multi-cultural cadets, staff, and alumni in the process of developing activities that will assist in the recruitment of underrepresented populations of prospective cadets. (Chief of Staff & Director of Admissions)
5. Improve how students of color, first-generation college students, and other underrepresented populations are identified in the admissions inquiry and applicant pool. (Director of Admissions)
6. Increase yield for admitted first-time college or transfer students from underrepresented and underserved populations. (Director of Admissions)
7. Increase community partnerships to assist with the recruitment of underrepresented cadets. (Director of Admissions & Chief Diversity Officer)

Metrics and Indicators (disaggregate by demographics where possible)

1. Enrollment numbers for gateway program participants
2. Yield rate for admitted first-time college and transfer students
3. Financial assistance funding

Objective 2

Increase retention and academic success of historically underrepresented and underserved undergraduate students.

Tasks

1. Identify specific barriers to the academic progress and success of underrepresented and underserved student populations (Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of the Faculty)
2. Ensure broad participation of underrepresented and underserved students in experiential learning opportunities or other high-impact programs (Commandant, & Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of the Faculty)
3. Assess the effectiveness of academic support and high-impact student success and mentorship programs to ensure efforts and outcomes align with goals; identify opportunities for continuous improvement. (Director of Athletics, Director of Assessment & Evaluation, Commandant, & Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of the Faculty)
4. Address the equitable student access of admission policies, procedures, and financial assistance (FAFSA, grants scholarships, etc.) (Director of Financial Aid & Director of Admissions)

Metrics and Indicators (disaggregate by demographics where possible)

1. Participation rates in academic support programs
2. First to second year retention rates
3. Second to third year retention rates
4. Results of program evaluation/assessments
5. Participation rates of first-year Cadet's mentorship by upper-class cadets

Objective 3

Recruit and retain a diverse faculty and staff

Tasks

1. Create an aggressive multi-dimensional recruitment and retention plan for all levels of faculty and staff. (Deputy Superintendent for Finance, Administration and Support & Chief Diversity Officer, Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of the Faculty & Chief Diversity Officer)
2. Improve workplace experience through the use of exit interviews and climate surveys and the implementation of employee leadership and mentoring programs including underrepresented and underserved populations. (Director of Assessment and Evaluation, Director of Human Resources, Director of the Center for Leadership and Ethics, and Deputy Superintendent for Finance, Administration and Support)
3. Review and benchmark salaries for equity issues and examine diversity and experiences of underrepresented managers, executives, and tenured faculty to identify and remove barriers to opportunities and advancement. (Chief Diversity Officer, Director of Human Resources, & Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of the Faculty)
4. Increase recognition programs that acknowledge the contribution made to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion. (Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of the Faculty, Deputy Superintendent for Finance, Administration and Support, Commandant, & Director of Human Resources, and Chief Diversity Officer)
5. Create and evaluate strategies to recruit and retain faculty and staff with diverse physical ability disabilities, and ensure that accommodations for employees with diverse abilities are easily accessible. (Office of Human Services, Deputy Superintendent for Finance, Administration and Support, Commandant, & Chief of Staff)
6. Collaborate with tenured professors and professional staff at Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) for resource sharing and talent acquisition. (Deputy Superintendent for Finance, Administration and Support, Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of the Faculty & Chief Diversity Officer)

Metrics and Indicators (disaggregate by demographics where possible)

1. Faculty and staff headcount and percentages.
2. Managerial and executive staff counts and percentages
3. Retention rates for faculty and staff
4. Tenure and promotion rates
5. Review of dashboard
6. Leadership development participation for faculty and staff.

Goal 2: Climate and Intergroup Relations

Create and sustain an organizational environment that affirms and respects diversity and employs inclusive practices throughout its daily operations

Objective 1

Create and maintain a climate that acknowledges and celebrates diversity and employs inclusive practices throughout its daily operations, aligned with VMI's vision, mission, and values.

Tasks

1. Use ongoing Institute climate surveys and focus groups to periodically assess student, faculty, and staff feedback that may signify barriers to a welcoming and inclusive environment related to diversity. (Director of Assessment and Evaluation & Chief Diversity Officer)
2. Create a meaningful dialogue between and among groups that increases understanding of varied perspectives and the nature of social and economic inequalities. (Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of the Faculty, Commandant, Director of the Center for Leadership and Ethics, & Chief Diversity Officer)
3. Offer educational and celebratory events for cadets, faculty, staff, and the VMI community that recognizes, value, and honors diversity and promotes inclusion. Evaluate these programs to gauge the impact on the climate for diversity and inclusion. (Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of the Faculty, Commandant, & Chief Diversity Officer)
4. Provide ongoing compulsory education and training for the VMI community on the prevention of harassment, discrimination, and identity-based violence and related equity policies; promote productive ways to resolve conflict; effectively address concerns and complaints. (Inspector General, and Chief Diversity Officer)
5. Ensure that all VMI cadets, faculty, and staff are compliant with newly released DHRM Training on Cultural Competence. (Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of the Faculty, Commandant, & Director of Human Resources)
6. Support physical spaces that address the needs of multicultural and underrepresented/underserved populations. (Institute Planning Officer & Chief Diversity Officer)

Metrics and Indicators (disaggregate by demographics where possible)

1. Perceptions of climate for diversity and inclusion as measured by climate survey and other sources of information
2. Using climate surveys and evaluations, measure awareness and understanding of Institute resources related to harassment, discrimination, and identity-based violence.
3. Results of program evaluations designed to facilitate intergroup dialogue and trust
4. Using national benchmarking, triangulate institutional results

Goal 3: Education and Scholarship

Engage students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the community in learning varied perspectives of domestic and international diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice. Create and sustain an organizational environment that affirms and respects diversity and employs inclusive practices throughout its daily operations.

Objective 1

Offer courses, curricula, art/artistic events, and learning opportunities at the undergraduate level that achieve DE&I learning goals.

Tasks

1. Establish DE&I competencies for cadets, faculty, and staff. (Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of the Faculty Commandant, Chief Diversity Officer)
2. Create opportunities that help faculty, staff, and cadets assess the achievement of DE&I learning outcomes in class or co-curricular activities. (Director of Assessment and Evaluation, Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of the Faculty, Commandant, Director of Athletics, & Director of Human Resources)
3. Hire faculty and staff with content expertise in areas of study that examine diverse cultures and intersectionality. (Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of the Faculty)
4. Provide opportunities for cadets to learn about diverse identities and cultures. (Commandant & Chief Diversity Officer, Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of the Faculty)
5. Reevaluate the curriculum with a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens (Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of the Faculty, Department Heads & Chief Diversity Officer)
6. Incentivize research conducted by cadets and faculty in diversity, equity, and inclusion areas. (Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of the Faculty & Chief Diversity Officer)
7. Provide compulsory multi-faceted training and education for cadets, faculty, and staff on “difficult dialogues” in multiple settings, e.g., classrooms, living environments, organizations, offices, etc. (Chief Diversity Officer, Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of the Faculty, Director of Intercollegiate Athletics Commandant, and Director of the Center for Leadership and Ethics)

Metrics and Indicators (disaggregate by demographics where possible)

1. Participation by faculty and staff in professional development programs related to curricular transformation, in support of diversity, equity and inclusion
2. Cadet participation in co-curricular opportunities tied to Inclusive Excellence
3. Research output related to DE&I topics
4. Evaluation of programs related to inclusive teaching
5. Self-reported improvement in knowledge and skill related to teaching and curricular development

Objective 2

Increase the cultural competencies of faculty and staff.

Tasks

1. Create virtual and in-person professional development opportunities designed to improve awareness and competencies of faculty and staff with regards to DE&I. (Chief Diversity Officer & Director of Human Resources)

Metrics and Indicators (disaggregate by demographics where possible)

1. Level of participation in professional development opportunities
2. Self-reported growth in awareness and competencies
3. Faculty assessment of diversity-related learning goals

Goal 4: Organizational Culture and Accountability

Create and sustain an institutional infrastructure that effectively supports progress and accountability in achieving DE&I goals.

Objective 1

Develop a robust, empowered infrastructure to address longstanding institutional challenges and sustain the journey toward Inclusive Excellence.

Tasks

1. Incorporate diversity, equity and inclusion in all strategic planning efforts. (Deputy Superintendent for Finance, Administration and Support, Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of the Faculty, Commandant, & Chief Diversity Officer)
2. Increase diversity of applicant pool for all levels of administration, faculty, and staff positions. (All Hiring Managers)
3. Conduct annual compulsory training for senior leadership in alignment with values. (Chief Diversity Officer)
4. Design processes and share resources and best practices across the institution. (Chief Diversity Officer)

Metrics and Indicators (disaggregate by demographics where possible)

1. Documentation of mission and scope for Chief Diversity Officer
2. Documented processes for reporting progress towards the DE&I goals established in the Inclusive Excellence framework
3. Evidence of DE&I integration in the post (campus) wide and unit-level operations plans
4. Report on where the use of shared resources and dispersion of best practices have been implemented
5. Number of formal cross-post collaborations

Objective 2

Create a culture of evaluation and continuous improvement for administrators and senior leaders.

Tasks

1. Engage critical leaders and stakeholders in analyzing disaggregated data and special studies to understand better and address longstanding challenges for underrepresented and underserved students, faculty, and staff. (Chief Diversity Officer & Director of Assessment and Evaluation)
2. Continue systems of reporting and accountability for SWaM procurement. (Director of Procurement)
3. Track the retention for diverse faculty, staff, and students (graduation rates) (Director of Assessment and Evaluation).
4. Evaluate internal policies, processes, and practices throughout the institution. (Institute Planning Committee - IPC)

Metrics and Indicators (disaggregate by demographics where possible)

1. Annual reports from VMI's CDO to the Commonwealth demonstrating progress toward the ONE Virginia Goals
2. Documentation of reporting processes
3. Work groups dedicated to analyzing disaggregated data related to DE&I.
4. Number of policies and processes evaluated and redesigned using an equity lens

Objective 3

Sustain and increase institute-wide efforts designed to amplify potential secure gifts, grants, and opportunities to advance the DEI goals in the Inclusive Excellence framework.

Tasks

1. Seek foundation support for key gateway and academic-support programs that serve women, international, underrepresented, and underserved populations, veterans, and those with diverse abilities.
(Chief Diversity Officer)

Metrics and Indicators (disaggregate by demographics where possible)

1. Funding support for DEI initiatives from fundraising efforts
2. Increased initiatives aimed at women and multicultural alumni cultivation
3. Annual reports on the satisfaction or the engagement of multicultural alum

Goal 5: Community Engagement

Community Engagement: Leverage institutional philanthropy and community partnerships to create collective impact with other community organizations

Objective

Evaluate and expand community engagement and partnerships to create collective impact with other community organizations.

Tasks

1. Evaluation of existing engagement and partnerships to determine how to best leverage the institution's resources to bring about the conditions of collective impact. (Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of the Faculty, Commandant, Director of Intercollegiate Athletics, and Chief Diversity Officer)
2. Identify and build partnerships with community organizations. (Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of the Faculty, Commandant, Director of Intercollegiate Athletics, and Chief Diversity Officer)

Metrics and Indicators (disaggregate by demographics where possible)

1. Results of evaluation
2. Number and type of partnerships
3. Demonstrated impact of partnerships on community outcomes

Dr. Jamica N. Love Named Chief Diversity Officer at VMI

Lexington, Va., May 26, 2021—After nearly two decades of experience in student engagement, behavioral intervention, and accountability in higher education, Dr. Jamica N. Love has been named the chief diversity officer at VMI.

She was chosen from a competitive pool of candidates in a national hiring search.

“She stood out, and will be the right person at the right time,” said Michael Hamlar, a member of the VMI board of visitors and part of the chief diversity officer search committee. “It’s an honor to recommend her for this position, and we are excited to see what she accomplishes.”

Through the development of programs and initiatives, Love is tasked with a mission focused on guiding the strategic direction of the Institute’s diversity, equality, and inclusion. Her office will be located in Smith Hall and she will report to Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins ’85, VMI superintendent.

“Her experience and education will bring a wealth of good ideas and meaningful change to VMI,” said Wins. “I look forward to working closely with Dr. Love to bring new opportunities to the Corps of Cadets and the entire VMI community to connect and grow.”

Love earned both her doctoral degree in higher education administration and her master’s degree in counseling psychology from Northeastern University. She earned a bachelor’s degree in general experimental psychology from Emmanuel College, also in Boston.

She has held roles at Roxbury Community College, Pine Manor College, Eastern Nazarene College, among other schools, where her responsibilities often focused on student life, campus morale, compliance, suicide prevention, and the implementation of multicultural and social justice programs. Most recently, she has served as a keynote speaker for national and regional conferences addressing diversity, equality, and inclusion in education.

“I desire to guide students to be principled individuals and responsible citizens as it pertains to their development and understanding of equality, equity, and inclusion,” said Love. “Diversity is about a moral imperative, and a desire to see social justice achieved in the areas of age, class, ethnicity, gender, nationality, physical ability, race, religion, and sexual orientation.”

Love will assume this position July 9, and will be appointed a Lieutenant Colonel in the Virginia Militia.



