



BOARD OF VISITORS

201 SMITH HALL, LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA 24450-0304

Superintendent's Agenda Items

September 22, 2026

Draft Minutes

The Virginia Military Institute Board of Visitors met at 8 a.m. on Tuesday, September 22, 2026 in Lexington, Virginia. The meeting was streamed live on YouTube in accordance with State Council of Higher Education for Virginia guidelines. The recording of the meeting is archived at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SaEUWCUxglE>. Meeting materials are publicly available at <https://www.vmi.edu/bovmaterials>.

Board of Visitors members present:

Col. Michael Dick '77

Daryl Deke '82

Yolanda Green

Don Hall

Col. Jamie Inman '86

Del. Bill Janis '84

Lester Johnson '95

Rear Adm. Terry McKnight '78

Col. Anthony Meador '95

Gov. Ralph Northam '81

Nancy Phillips

Maj. Gen. James Ring '88

Kate Todd

Damon Williams '90

Tom Williamson '72

Elise Woodworth '07

Board of Visitors members participating virtually:

Lt. Col. Jim Joustra '76 (from Florida, medical reasons)

Others present:

Lt. Gen. David Furness, Superintendent

Lt. Cmdr. Matt Simonic, Senior Assistant Attorney General

Col. Bill Wyatt, Board Secretary

Cadet Matthew Assouad, First Class President

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

1. Col. Michael Dick '77 welcomed those gathered for the meeting and turned the floor over to LtGen David Furness '87.
2. LtGen Furness reported that VMI's redesigned website had been launched following a multiyear development effort. The site was designed primarily for mobile use and to provide prospective cadets with a more streamlined path to admissions and financial-aid information. He also noted VMI's ranking of 73rd among 500 institutions included in TIME magazine's Best Colleges ranking and emphasized the importance of institutional rankings to prospective students and families evaluating return on investment.



The Superintendent discussed the June athletics symposium, On Winning, which was intended to establish a new performance baseline for VMI Athletics and move the program beyond an approach focused simply on competing. Feedback from the symposium will contribute to development of VMI's first comprehensive athletics strategic plan and emphasized building a winning culture.

LtGen Furness reported VMI has been awarded a grant for cadets to conduct addition research into the history of enslaved individuals at VMI.

He also reported on international alumni and enrollment outreach in Thailand and Taiwan. The Superintendent described strong alumni engagement in both locations and identified the international alumni community as an underutilized resource for VMI.

The Superintendent shared a video clip from Fox Sports highlighting VMI's watch party for the Freedom 250 Grand Prix event. He emphasized the importance of the national exposure generated by the event.

3. The Superintendent provided an update on government relations activities. He reported that VMI had submitted its six-year plan and continued to pursue state funding priorities. He noted that VMI had issued requests for proposals for state and federal government-relations representation.

At the federal level, VMI is seeking changes to policies affecting ROTC scholarships at senior military colleges. The objective is to reduce competitive disadvantages created by state-supported scholarship incentives at other senior military colleges and, where possible, increase commissioning opportunities at VMI. The Superintendent also discussed efforts to restore federal recognition of the military contribution made by senior military colleges and their ROTC programs.

Key upcoming dates include a legislative open house on October 29 at VMI, budget-related meetings in the fall, and the cadet legislative visit and reception scheduled for February 17, 2027.

He also reported on efforts to establish a General Assembly Fellows program. Discussions continued concerning housing, meals, and academic arrangements for participating cadets. A potential partnership with Bluefield University was identified as one possible means of providing an academic component for fellows while they work in legislative offices.

4. The Superintendent discussed matriculation. He reported that the matriculation process was a "Whole Damn Team" effort executed primarily by cadets, with Institute



personnel providing support. He commended the cadets for executing the complex process with limited supervision. He said a total of 532 new cadets matriculated, making it the largest entering class in VMI history. The class had an average recalculated GPA of approximately 3.6, and the Superintendent rejected the suggestion that the larger class had been achieved by compromising academic quality.

The Superintendent noted that the enrollment environment has become increasingly competitive as the number of traditional college-age students declines. He emphasized the importance of VMI's distinctive educational model and demonstrable return on investment and stated that increasing applications would allow the Institute to become more selective.

The Superintendent also identified ROTC scholarship recipients as an important enrollment target because those cadets provide additional information about academic and physical preparation and historically demonstrate strong retention. He noted that increasing the number of ROTC scholarship cadets could both strengthen enrollment and increase commissioning.

The Board was advised, however, that the larger entering class had been substantially offset by lower-than-anticipated retention of continuing cadets. The Superintendent identified academic performance as a principal factor in the retention issue and said additional work was needed to improve retention.

The Superintendent also discussed VMI's recruitment strategy and the importance of increasing applications. The goal is to expand the national market for VMI while maintaining the personal engagement that distinguishes the Institute's admissions process.

5. Col. Shannon Eskam reviewed the Class of 2027+3 class profile. She noted the class is highly qualified based on GPA.

Lt. Col. Joe Hagy reviewed the geographic composition of the entering class and efforts to improve recruitment outside Virginia, particularly in the Midwest, Great Lakes, West Coast, and Richmond regions.

He said recruitment strategies included targeted purchasing of prospective-student names, increased recruiting events, greater use of alumni in recruiting, and reassignment of regional recruiting resources. The Board was advised that these efforts produced increases in applications, matriculants, and yield in several target markets.

Lt. Col. Hagy reported that financial considerations had become a significant factor in



late-stage decisions, with some families seeking substantially greater financial assistance from competing institutions. Staff noted that VMI had attempted to address individual financial concerns but could not match some competing offers.

The Board was told that open houses and the Summer Transition Program continue to be particularly effective recruitment tools. Students who participate in these programs have matriculated at higher rates, and the programs provide prospective cadets and their families substantial opportunities to interact with faculty, cadets, and staff before making an enrollment decision.

Col. Eskam also discussed continued refinement of the Institute's customer relationship management system. The system has reduced the time required to review applications while preserving VMI's individualized admissions process. She emphasized that technology would not replace personal engagement, including interviews and direct contact with prospective cadets.

6. The Board received an update on academics from Brig. Gen. Bob Moreschi, Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of the Faculty. He gave an update on accreditation and VMI's quality enhancement plan. The Institute is pursuing a quality enhancement initiative focused on experiential learning, including internships, research, and other opportunities designed to provide cadets with practical educational experiences.

The Board was advised that the accreditation site visit was scheduled for the fall and that the site team's preliminary observations would not constitute the official accreditation determination until action by the accrediting organization.

The Dean also discussed artificial intelligence and VMI's efforts to establish appropriate policies, educational practices, and institutional support for its use. The Institute supports experimentation with AI while recognizing issues involving academic integrity and the Honor Code. A coordinating structure has been established to facilitate education and experimentation involving AI. The Institute is also seeking a librarian with AI expertise to support faculty and cadets. Potential applications include academic instruction and administrative functions such as course scheduling.

7. Col. Ley Havird '90, VMI Commandant, reported that VMI had met its five-week attrition goal of 5 percent or less and had also met its Hell Week attrition goal of less than 2.5 percent. The New Cadet Retention Center was credited with helping retain cadets by providing additional engagement and support during the early weeks of training. Greater involvement by tactical officers, company commanders, coaches, counseling personnel, and admissions volunteers was also identified as beneficial to retention.



Col. Havird discussed injuries during matriculation. Most injuries involved lower extremities, blisters, bruises, fatigue, and heat-related issues. Two cadets required transportation to a hospital, which was unusual compared with prior years. The Institute indicated that it would review those cases and related medical-care issues.

The Commandant reported that military appearance and professionalism among cadets were improving but remained an area requiring continued attention. He emphasized the importance of holding cadet leaders accountable for the performance and appearance of the Corps and described peer leadership and mentorship as critical to that effort.

The Commandant also discussed changes to the cadet schedule and club-sports structure. Club sports were organized into tiers to provide additional training opportunities for highly competitive programs while maintaining appropriate academic and military requirements. He described efforts to better align athletic teams, ROTC units, and cadet development.

The Superintendent identified air conditioning in the barracks as an initiative included in VMI's six-year plan. He stated that VMI is the only senior military college or federal service academy without air conditioning in its barracks.

The Superintendent cited heat, sleep, academic performance, athletic recovery, and military performance as reasons for pursuing the project. He estimated the total project cost at approximately \$9.45 million, including planning costs, and noted that an alumnus in the industry had indicated a willingness to provide favorable pricing.

8. VMI Athletic Director Jamaal Walton '07 advised that VMI Athletics had improved its academic performance, including its highest reported term GPA since 2018. Revenue-generation efforts included licensing, corporate partnerships, apparel sponsorships, and other opportunities to generate revenue from VMI's athletics brand.

Walton discussed the importance of corporate sponsorships and alumni connections to prospective sponsors. Board members were encouraged to assist in identifying businesses and organizations that could support VMI Athletics and the Institute through sponsorships.

The Athletic Director also discussed football scheduling. The Superintendent and Director of Athletics explained the decision to move away from certain Power Four opponents in favor of a more competitive non-conference schedule. The rationale discussed included increasing the number of home games, improving revenue



opportunities, reducing injury risk, and better positioning the football program for conference competition. The 2027 schedule was cited as an example, with VMI planning not to play West Virginia and instead seek a more competitive opponent.

9. Col. Andrew Luna, Director of Institutional Research, Planning, and Assessment, provided the Board a presentation on the development of institutional key performance indicators (KPIs).

The Board was advised that the KPI framework was developed in conjunction with the new strategic plan and is intended to provide regular data on progress toward strategic objectives. The Superintendent stated that the Institute intends to review the measures quarterly once the new strategic plan is implemented.

Don Hall pointed out the potential usefulness of the comparative data in communicating with state legislators and other external stakeholders.

10. Having no further business to discuss, the board adjourned at 10:41 a.m.



BOARD OF VISITORS

201 SMITH HALL, LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA 24450-0304

Full Board Meeting
September 23, 2026
DRAFT Minutes

The Virginia Military Institute Board of Visitors met for a business meeting at 8 a.m. on Wednesday, September 23, 2026 in Lexington, Virginia. The meeting was streamed live on YouTube in accordance with State Council of Higher Education for Virginia guidelines. The recording of the meeting is archived at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7VrKuVrcs6Y>. Meeting materials are publicly available at <https://www.vmi.edu/bovmaterials>.

Board of Visitors members present:

Col. Michael Dick '77	Col. Anthony Meador '95
Daryl Deke '82	Gov. Ralph Northam '81
Yolanda Green	Nancy Phillips
Don Hall	Maj. Gen. James Ring '88
Col. Jamie Inman '86	Kate Todd
Del. Bill Janis '84	Damon Williams '90
Lester Johnson '95	Tom Williamson '72
Rear Adm. Terry McKnight '78	Elise Woodworth '07

Board of Visitors members participating virtually:

Lt. Col. Jim Joustra '76 (from Florida, medical reasons)

Others present:

Lt. Gen. David Furness, Superintendent
Lt. Cmdr. Matt Simonic, Senior Assistant Attorney General
Col. Bill Wyatt, Board Secretary

1. Col. Dick called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m. in the Turman Room of the Preston Library.
2. The Regimental Commander, Kimlong Nguyen, reported on the implementation of the revised cadet schedule. He said the schedule has provided additional time for Corps training, including practice parades and room inspections, while moving physical training to the morning. He noted that the change has provided more academic time and allowed cadets to wind down earlier in the evening.

The Honor Court Vice President for Education, Lucas Edwards, reported that the Honor System remains a single-sanction system and that the Honor Court's principal emphasis for the academic year is education. The Court is increasing efforts to explain the purpose and value of the Honor System, including bringing alumni to campus to discuss the system and



its impact on their careers. Three additional assistant prosecutors were expected to bring the Honor Court's membership to 14.

3. Dallas Clark '99 provided an update on the activities of the VMI Alumni Agencies and their support of the Institute. For FY2026, the agencies reported raising approximately \$37.9 million from more than 4,300 donors. Increasing the number and breadth of donors was identified as a continuing priority, with an emphasis on demonstrating that meaningful participation does not require large gifts.

The agencies reported that fundraising priorities are established in coordination with the Superintendent and Institute leadership. FY2027 priorities include support for Moody Hall and the CLE Phase 2 parking structure, athletics scholarships and operations, the lacrosse/soccer stadium, the Peay Academic Endowment, and the Call to Duty program. Clark reported that more than \$20 million was expected to be raised through Moody Hall naming opportunities and that approximately \$3.4 million had been placed in the Call to Duty endowment.

The Board was advised that the Institute's endowment had a June 30 market value of approximately \$942 million, with a fiscal-year return of 15.04 percent and an 8.99 percent return since inception.

The Superintendent noted the importance of unrestricted philanthropic support and expressed appreciation for a three-year, \$1.5 million unrestricted commitment from the Alumni Association Board, which provides flexibility to address priority initiatives benefiting cadets.

The Board also discussed recurring and unrestricted giving. The agencies noted that relatively small monthly gifts can have a significant cumulative impact and that the upcoming strategic plan and campaign development will provide an opportunity to better explain the value of unrestricted giving.

4. Parents Council Report

Jeff '94 and Ginny Crenshaw, co-presidents of the VMI Parents Council, briefed the Board on the Council's activities. The Council consists of approximately 140 members representing 86 family units and supports recruitment, communication with prospective and current families, Matriculation, Rat Send-Offs, and Corps activities.

The Council participates in all six open houses and contacted more than 600 appointed students during the prior spring to assist them in completing the admissions and matriculation process. Members also participate in recruiting events around the country.



The Council maintains parent communication platforms, including a Rat Mass Facebook group, and provides families with accurate information about VMI programs and procedures. Members participate in Rat Send-Offs and provide substantial volunteer support during Matriculation.

The Council also hosts tailgates at home football games, serving approximately 300 to 400 cadets at each event, and holds two business meetings each year at which parents receive official updates from Institute leadership.

Rear Adm. McKnight, on behalf of the board, expressed appreciation for the Council's volunteer service. Elise Woodworth asked about opportunities for parents who are not currently members of the Council to remain engaged. The Council explained that parents who do not initially qualify may be eligible to join in subsequent years.

5. A motion was made by Nancy Phillips and seconded by Bill Janis to approve the items on the consent calendar. Due to questions about the SWaM plan, that item was removed from the consent calendar to be considered during the Audit, Finance, and Planning Committee report. The following items passed by voice vote:

- Approval of the minutes of the April 2026 board meeting;
- A retirement resolution honoring Karen Ford;
- Approval of graduation list;
- Approval of changes to the faculty;
- Approval of curricular changes;
- Approval of changes to academic regulations;
- Approval of Jackson-Hope grants; and
- Approval of delegation of contractual authority.

6. Committee Reports

Academic Affairs Committee

Nancy Phillips reported on a six-year postdoctoral pilot program supported by a Jackson-Hope grant. The program will provide three consecutive two-year postdoctoral appointments intended to bring new ideas and expertise into participating academic departments. A department will be selected to conduct the first search, with the initial appointment expected to begin in August 2027.

The Committee also reviewed academic curricular and policy changes, the Peay Academic Excellence and Honors Program, and faculty compensation. The Board was advised that the Institute currently has 12 Peay Scholars and that Peay and Merit Scholars receive



substantial mentoring and academic support through faculty engagement and academic support services.

Phillips also reported that VMI's average faculty salary currently ranks sixth among Virginia public colleges and universities, compared with 12th in 2009.

Audit, Finance and Planning Committee

Anthony Meador '95 discussed the SWAM Business Plan. He explained that the 0.01 percent targets for women-owned and minority-owned businesses were not intended to indicate that the Institute does not procure from those categories. Federal requirements prohibit preferential treatment based on those classifications, while the reporting format does not permit a zero to be entered. The Committee found no substantive concerns with the plan.

Meador also presented the Institute's six-year plan. The plan is required by state law and addresses tuition and fees, revenue, financial aid, financial strategy, financial projections, state funding requests, capital requests, and degree-program changes. The Committee explained that some apparent future deficits in the state-required spreadsheet result from the inability to enter future general-fund requests and revenues and therefore do not represent final Institute budget projections.

The plan includes strategic initiatives relating to learning pathways, enrollment management, student access, a proposed Center for Teaching and Learning, and new academic programs. Capital requests in the plan total approximately \$135.6 million and include major projects such as CLE Phase 2 and the associated parking structure.

The Committee emphasized that submission of the six-year plan does not commit the Institute to specific tuition levels or expenditures beyond those subsequently approved by the Board.

Daryl Deke made a motion, seconded by Bill Janis to approve the SWaM plan. The motion passed by a voice vote.

Bill Janis made a motion, seconded by Kate Todd to approved the six-year plan. The motion passed by a voice vote.

The Committee also reviewed FY2026 budget performance. Enrollment and state-funded programs were generally within one to two percent of budget. The auxiliary reserve fund balance declined to approximately \$9.17 million at the end of FY2026 and is projected to decline further during FY2027. The Board discussed the need to closely monitor the fund balance and to address the underlying operating pressures before consideration of the FY2027-28 budget.



Meador reported that athletics and the museum had structural deficits in the prior fiscal year. The Committee also received updates concerning auxiliary services, including dining operations, the bookstore, the museum, and facilities projects.

The museum reported that it remains institutionally committed to preserving its collections and is preparing for accreditation review expected in January, with results anticipated by May. Facilities updates included the ongoing windows project, expected to be completed in May 2027; completion of the cadet safety card-access project during the current semester; and the Northeast Barracks expansion and renovation, with the expansion expected to be completed in approximately eight to ten months.

Corps and Military Affairs Committee

Maj. Gen. Ring '88 said the Committee discussed military affairs and the relationship between athletics and commissioning. Particular attention was given to ensuring that cadet-athletes have viable pathways to military commissioning when traditional ROTC timelines conflict with athletic participation.

The Committee discussed efforts to use ROTC scholarships and other sources of financial aid more effectively and to strengthen coordination among coaches, ROTC personnel, and the Commandant's staff. The goal is to improve commissioning opportunities for cadet-athletes, including those who may not follow the traditional ROTC pipeline.

Operations and Personnel Committee

Kate Todd reported the Committee discussed a multiyear project to replace and modernize the Institute's primary data and document-management system, including migration to a cloud environment. An independent project manager is expected to assist with implementation, training, and policy development. The project is estimated to cost approximately \$2 million, with state funding being pursued.

The Committee also reviewed the summer incident involving an individual on post with a bullwhip that produced sounds resembling an active-shooter situation. Law enforcement responded within approximately three minutes and neutralized the actual threat. The principal lesson identified was the need to improve communication to the post during such incidents, including expanding authorization to use the mass-notification system and developing neutral, immediate notices for use during emergencies.

The Committee discussed continuing adjustments to General Order No. 1 and noted that changes to one portion of the schedule can have significant effects throughout the daily and weekly schedule.



The Committee also received an update on diversity, opportunity, and inclusion activities, including efforts focused on belonging, leadership, and connection. The Institute received a \$50,000 Jessie Ball duPont grant to support inclusive-history projects and research, including archival research, cadet internships, and community engagement.

Athletics Committee

Lester Johnson '95 said the Athletics Committee received an update from Director of Intercollegiate Athletics Jamaal Walton '07. The Committee also heard from cadet-athlete representatives regarding the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee.

The Committee discussed the competitiveness of VMI athletics, the financial demands of Division I athletics, and the importance of treating institutional support for athletics as an investment rather than simply a subsidy. The Board discussed the broader resources required for competitive athletics, including coaching, strength and conditioning, sports medicine, nutrition, and other athlete-support services.

Johnson reported the Committee also discussed the relationship between athletics and military commissioning and the need for a more integrated approach to helping cadet-athletes remain in commissioning pipelines.

Advancement Committee

Damon Williams '90 said the Advancement Committee received a presentation from the Alumni Agencies Memorial Committee that included recommendations for updating and expanding VMI's physical memorial landscape. Williams noted that VMI has numerous historic memorials but comparatively fewer permanent memorials recognizing significant people and accomplishments from the Institute's more recent history.

Proposals discussed included recognition of pioneering African-American cadets; recognition of VMI's first class of women in connection with the upcoming 30th anniversary of women at VMI; recognition of alumni who achieved four-star general officer rank; recognition of cadets killed in military service; enhanced interpretation of the Jonathan Daniels memorial; recognition of VMI's historical relationship with slavery; and broader memorials reflecting the modern Corps of Cadets and the Institute's history.

The Committee emphasized that the proposals were intended to add historical context and recognition rather than remove or alter existing memorials. The Board discussed the importance of presenting VMI's history accurately and comprehensively.

Damon Williams made a motion, seconded by Nancy Phillips that the Board grant the Superintendent the discretion to proceed with the memorials as proposed by the Alumni



Agencies' Memorial Committee as timing and resources allow. The motion carried by voice vote.

Appeals Committee

Tom Williamson reported the Committee had considered one appeal of dismissal over the summer. Three Committee members reviewed the record to determine whether the appeal warranted a full hearing and concluded that it did not have merit. The Committee therefore affirmed the Honor Court's action and dismissed the appeal.

The Committee also received an update on the revised Honor Court standard operating procedure, which became effective with the beginning of the academic year.

Executive Committee

Mike Dick said the Committee received an update on government relations efforts including procurement of state and federal government-relations consulting services, continued engagement with the Governor's administration and members of the General Assembly, and preparation for a legislative open house at VMI on October 29. The Institute is also developing a General Assembly Fellows program to provide cadets opportunities to engage with legislators during the legislative session.

The Committee discussed the importance of providing the governor with VMI's input in advance of the December 17 presentation of amendments to the 2026-28 state budget. A cadet legislative visit and legislative reception were also noted for February 17.

The Board reviewed its governing documents, including the Statement of Governance and Board bylaws. The Executive Committee had completed its required review and recommended no changes.

7. Closed Session

At 10:56 a.m., the Board closed session to discuss:

1. 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 § 2.2-3711(A.)(1.), relating to specific personnel matters and the performance of Institute employees.
2. Discussion of special awards in accordance with Va. Code § 2.2-3711(A.)(11.).
3. 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.



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) (7), pertaining to actual or probable litigation of the Institute.
5. Consultation with legal counsel regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel pursuant to Va. Code § 2.2-3711(A.)(8.).

The Board returned to open session at 12:58 p.m. A motion was made by Bill Janis and seconded by Kate Todd to certify that only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, and only those public business matters identified in the motion convening the board in closed session were discussed during the closed session. A roll call vote of the members presented was taken. All members present voted to certify the closed session. Don Hall was not present for the certification vote, but certified the session via email after the meeting.

8. Jonathan Myrick Daniels '61 Humanitarian Award

Bill Janis made a motion, seconded by Nancy Phillips to award the Jonathan Myrick Daniels '61 Humanitarian Award to former Virginia Governor L. Douglas Wilder. The motion passed by voice vote.

9. HB 1377 Ad Hoc Committee Report

Tom Williamson, co-chair of the ad hoc committee established to address the reporting requirement in HB 1377 provided an initial report.

The committee's charge is to report on VMI's response to the recommendations contained in the 2021 SCHEV/Barnes & Thornburg report. Committee members have been assigned areas of responsibility and will identify relevant Institute personnel, documents, and other sources of information. The committee also expects to conduct interviews with cadets, cadet leaders, cadet-athletes, faculty, and staff as appropriate.

The committee established October 31 as the target for completing its initial investigative work and beginning preparation of a draft report. The committee emphasized that the final product should be factual, concise, accurate, and timely.

Williamson noted that its statutory assignment includes responding to the recommendations of the 2021 report and permits, but does not require, additional recommendations for improvement. The committee discussed using prior reports submitted to the Governor as an important source of information and a starting point for its work.



10. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:07 p.m.