

## **VMI Board of Visitors Creates Subcommittee to Review Training Materials**

The VMI Board of Visitors Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee has created a subcommittee to review all training materials developed for cadets, faculty, and staff. The Inclusive Excellence Training Review Subcommittee will ensure all training materials will be tailored to the VMI experience, adhere to VMI's definitions of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and further advance the VMI mission. This subcommittee will be comprised of designated Board of Visitors Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee members and selected members from the superintendent's Inclusive Excellence Committee on post.

The creation of the subcommittee comes amid concerns raised over aspects of the training conducted on post as not being suitable for VMI cadets, faculty and staff. VMI Superintendent Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85 has been working very closely with Lt. Col. Jamica Love, the Institute's chief diversity officer, to ensure that the instruction is aligned with how diversity and inclusion has been defined at VMI and is closely tied to "mission readiness" which prepares cadets for the world which they will enter after graduation.

"VMI's chief diversity officer has been working with the governor's secretary of the commonwealth, secretary of education and the diversity, opportunity and inclusion office to ensure that our training goals are aligned with the Commonwealth of Virginia" said Wins. "In fact, changes recommended by the governor's staff have been incorporated into VMI's training materials."

Most cadets were required to attend 50 minutes this year of Inclusive Excellence training coordinated by Love's office. The 4<sup>th</sup> Class cadets attended an hour of training twice this year. The training focused on activities that help cadets understand and respect that others may think differently than they do. Faculty and staff received 75 minutes of Inclusive Excellence training provided by the governor's secretary of administration.

"We have a responsibility to educate our cadets on diversity, equity, and inclusion issues but not indoctrinate," said Board of Visitors President Tom Watjen '76. "I can assure you we understand that distinction."

Since being established by the VMI Board of Visitors in December 2020, the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, under the leadership of board member Mike Hamlar, has been working earnestly to support the three objectives set forth by Watjen and approved unanimously by the full Board of Visitors:

- To create and foster a more diverse VMI;
- To create and foster a safe, equitable, and inclusive environment for all on post;
- To assure that we maintain a safe, rigorous process for escalating issues which have even the potential to violate the Code of a Cadet.

The committee's efforts are specifically linked to the second goal to create and foster a safe, equitable, and inclusive environment on post. VMI's DEI committee's mission is the oversight of all matters relating to the Institute's excellence in diversity across all programs and departments. In exercising its oversight and providing recommendations to the full board for approval, the committee shall consider, among other things, VMI's mission and method of education as well as producing citizen-soldiers imbued with honor, civility, and respect.