

# VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE

LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA 24450-0304

## **Board of Visitors Meeting Minutes June 27, 2024**

A special meeting of the VMI Board of Visitors was held virtually via Zoom on June 27, 2024, at 10 a.m. pursuant to notice posted on VMI.edu and the Commonwealth Calendar.

### Members present

Ernest Edgar '87  
Hugh Fain '80  
Conrad Garcia  
Teddy Gottwald '83  
James Inman '86  
Lester Johnson '95  
James Joustra '76  
Gussie Lord '01  
Scot Marsh '81  
Terence McKnight '78  
Meaghan Mobbs  
Nancy Phillips  
Maj. Gen. James Ring '88  
Kate Todd  
Thomas Watjen '76  
Damon Williams '90

### Others present

Maj. Gen. Cedric Wins '85  
Brig. Gen. Robert Moreschi  
Brig. Gen. Dallas Clark '99  
Col. Kevin Faust  
Col. John Young  
Col. Bill Wyatt  
Col. David Gray  
Lt. Col. Shannon Eskam  
Lt. Col. Mike McCarthy  
Jamaal Walton  
Briana Williams

### Members not present (excused)

John Adam's '96

1. Tom Watjen called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. He welcomed the group and told the group about the Executive Committee meeting the day before. He also called attention to the written comments that were submitted to the board for consideration.
2. Watjen turned to the superintendent, Maj. Gen. Cedric Wins for any updates. Maj. Gen. Wins updated the board on admissions efforts to date for this recruitment cycle. As of Monday, June 24, VMI has received 516 deposits. 410 of those 516 are full reservations. He said Admissions is still tracking 9 – 12 recruited cadet-athletes who have yet to pay their deposit. He said the average high school GPA for appointed cadets is 3.729. 44% will be pursuing liberal arts degrees, 30% engineering, and the balance in other STEM majors. Maj. Gen. Wins believes the Institute is in good shape to meet or exceed its recruitment goal for the 2024-25 academic year.

Ernie Edgar asked about the current state of the FAFSA issues. Lt. Col. Eskam said the Institute is in good shape and has only minimal impacts from those changes.



3. Kate Todd raised the issue of the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP). She asked how it might be intertwined with admissions and whether there might be cadets still considering VMI where VMSDEP might be helpful. Lt. Col. Eskam explained the changes to the VMSDEP would not affect their admission nor does it affect their final financial aid award.

Jim Joustra asked about the number of cadets who use the VMSDEP. Maj. Gen. Wins said for the most recent academic year, 50 cadets used VMSDEP benefits. He said the Institute anticipates the number might go as high as 70 for the next academic year.

Maj. Gen. Wins gave an update on VMSDEP. He said VMI supports our veterans and the VMSDEP. The program was established in 1930 as the War Orphan Program. Over the years, eligibility for the program has been expanded. Public college presidents last year asked the governor and the General Assembly to fund the program. Currently, the program is a waiver program whose cost is born by each institution's students. Recent changes to the program allow institutions to recoup a portion of the costs from federal aid for which a student may be eligible. The superintendent said in 2017, VMSDEP cost VMI \$73,000. In contrast, the program cost the Institute \$1,018,962 last year.

Discussion of the VMSDEP ensued. Kate Todd asked if VMI was engaging in Richmond at this time. She suggested if there is an opportunity to lead, this should be an issue where VMI is a leader. Maj. Gen. Wins says clarity of message is very important. The message should convey support for the program and a need to fund the program. Maj. Gen. Ring and Ernie Edgar emphasized the program needs to be fully funded so it is not a burden on our Institutions of higher education and their students.

There was some discussion of passing a resolution or sending a letter in support of the program and encouraging full funding. The Institute's government relations director, Col. Kim Parker, said the Institute has been very engaged on the issue and has made our position very clear. She said the superintendent has been very effective at conveying VMI's position on the issue. After further discussion, it was agreed to monitor the issue and be willing to be more visible if the need arises.

4. Maj. Gen. Wins updated the board on a proposal from Mountain Gateway Community College for VMI to serve as a fiscal agent for MGCC's proposed lab school. He explained it would have been too costly to VMI to serve as a fiscal agent. MGCC has since contracted with Old Dominion University to be their fiscal agent.
5. Maj. Gen. Wins also gave a status update on The Cadet newspaper. He said Brig. Gen. Moreschi has had three or four meetings over the past academic year. Negotiations are ongoing on a permit. The dean will resume discussions with next year's editors. Maj. Gen. Wins reiterated his support for a cadet-run newspaper that represents the voice of the Corps of Cadets.
6. Maj. Gen. Wins gave an update on the strategic plan. He said the team has been working on developing tasks and metrics for each of the five strategic initiatives. Maj. Gen. Wins'



presentation is attached to these minutes as **Appendix I**.

7. Entered closed session: A motion was made by Ernie Edgar and seconded by Kate Todd to enter closed session. The motion passed unanimously, and the board entered closed session at 11:16 a.m. to discuss:
  - a. Disciplinary and admissions 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. 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 and to special staff and the evaluation of specific departmental operations.
  - c. Consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members pertaining to actual or probable litigation pursuant to Va. Code Section 2.2-3711 (A) (7), pertaining to actual or probable litigation of the Institute.
  - 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) (8).
8. Return to open session: The board returned to open session at 12:15 p.m. A motion was made by Ernie Edgar and seconded by Conrad Garcia to certify the closed session. A roll call vote of the members present was taken. All members present voted to certify the closed session. Teddy Gottwald was not present online for the closed session. Board member Tom Watjen certified via email.
9. A motion was made by Ernie Edgar and seconded by Jim Joustra to approve the superintendent's recommendation for commandant of the Corps of Cadets as discussed in closed session. Once a contract is executed with the individual discussed in closed session, the Institute will announce the name and the minutes will be updated to reflect the name of the individual. The motion passed unanimously.
10. A motion was made by Ernie Edgar and seconded by Conrad Garcia to appoint the first class president as the cadet-student representative of the Board of Visitors for the 2024-2025 academic year. The motion passed unanimously.
11. Conrad Garcia made a motion that was seconded by Nancy Phillips to adjourn at 12:20 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.



# **APPENDIX I**





# Agenda

- **Guidance**
- **Vision**
- **Mission**
- **VMI Experience**
- **Strategic Process**
- **Forging 21<sup>st</sup> Century Initiatives**
- **High Priority 21<sup>st</sup> Century Objectives**
- **Prepare Exceptional Leaders**
- **Enhance Academic Excellence**
- **Foster Esprit de Corps**
- **Recruit Top Cadets and Faculty**
- **Delivering 21<sup>st</sup> Century Infrastructure**
- **Plan of Action and Milestones (POA&M)**
- **Way Ahead**
- **Summary**
- **Questions and Closing Comments**



## Guidance

*Built upon the time-honored Institute values of honor, excellence, self-discipline, courage, esprit de corps, and selfless service, the Forging 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leader's strategic plan provides a solid foundation from which the Institute will launch into its third century. With its unanimous approval, the Board of Visitors looks forward to the plans' implementation over the coming years.*

- Tom Watjen '76



## Superintendent's Initial Planning Guidance

*I spent a great deal of time over the past 15 months, engaging with, listening to and reflecting on interactions with many VMI stakeholders in an effort to codify the Institute's future direction. Insights from the events hosted during those months indicate to me that the Institute's direction has not fundamentally changed. Rather, the results of those sessions bring into focus that the world around us is rapidly changing and evolving. As a result, certain elements of the VMI experience must be critically analyzed in our march to 2039 to ensure we remain relevant and worthwhile.*

- Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85



# Vision

- As we work toward our 2039 bicentennial, we envision a VMI that will:
  - Grow and retain a Corps of Cadets strength at full operational capacity.
  - Be the first-choice destination for talented students, faculty, and staff.
  - Retain and graduate cadets at rates rivaling the nation's best institutions.
  - Have a leadership and educational model that other institutions of higher learning seek to emulate.
  - Teach America's next generation of leaders to think critically, act ethically, and work effectively in teams.
  - Develop and graduate honorable men and women who serve with courage and compassion, with a goal of more than half commissioning in the U.S. Armed Forces, and an additional quarter serving in other public service roles.

**VMI is to be the premier small college in the nation, unequalled in producing educated and honorable citizen-leaders, with a reputation for academic excellence.**





# Mission

The mission of VMI is 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.

**Virginia Military Institute believes the true measure of a college lies in the quality and performance of its graduates and their contribution to society.**



# VMI Experience

- A single-sanction honor system that reinforces integrity and is fair.
- A class system, built upon the Rat Line experience, that promotes accountability and comradery.
- A regimental system that promotes leader development.
- A rigorous academic curriculum that challenges cadets to think critically and encourages ethical reasoning.
- An inclusive and competitive educational environment combining academics, athletics, and military experiences.
- An enduring commitment to preparing graduates for a life of service to the nation and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

*The institution gave me not only a standard for my daily conduct among my men, but it endowed me with a heritage of honor and self-sacrifice.*

**- Gen. George C. Marshall, Class of 1901**



## Strategic Process

- There are currently five strategic initiatives, 27 objectives, 70 tasks, and 170 End State metrics.
- The Strategic Plan Executive OPT meets weekly to review the status and development of end-state metrics from the OPR's and guidance from the superintendent.
- Annually the Executive OPT will review and adjust as required to provide an update to the superintendent on the progress and execution of the tasks and end-states of all objectives and provide an in-progress review annually to the board.

**Tasks and metrics are on track for review by the board at their Sept. meeting. Public rollout of the full plan anticipated on/about Founders Day 2024.**



# Strategic Initiatives Co-Leads

Directed by LTC Michael McCarthy '78 Strategic Planning Officer

## Prepare Exceptional Leaders



TBD  
*Commandant*  
Col. Dave Gray  
*Exec. Dir., CLE*

## Enhance Academic Excellence



BG Bob Moreschi  
*Dean*  
Col. Rob McDonald  
*Assoc. Dean*

## Recruit Top Cadets & Boost Success



Brig. Gen. Bob Moreschi  
*Dean*  
Lt. Col. Shannon Eskam  
*Strategic Enrollment Mgmt.*

## Esprit de Corps



TBD  
*Commandant*  
Briana Williams  
*Chief Diversity Officer*

## Deliver 21<sup>st</sup> Century Infrastructure



BG Dallas Clark '99  
*Finance & Support*  
Col. Jeff Boobar  
*Finance & Support*



# Forging 21<sup>st</sup> Century Initiatives



*The VMI experience must refine, enhance, and adapt to meet the ever-changing needs of our communities, commonwealth and nation.*

**- Maj. Gen. Cedric T. Wins '85**



# High Priority 21<sup>st</sup> Century Objectives

- Teach, coach, mentor, guide, and direct cadets through the VMI training model to help them develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to become effective leaders.
- Ensure cadets receive mentally and physically challenging experiences that lead to meaningful personal and professional development.
- Strengthen high-impact practices and experiential learning, such as undergraduate research, global learning, internships, and service-learning activities.
- Integrate and leverage new and innovative technologies to improve our educational and organizational processes.
- Recruit, retain, and promote distinguished faculty with expertise in new and emerging fields.
- Facilitate a supportive, respectful, and professional operating environment for cadets, faculty, staff, and alumni.
- Create and champion a safe, secure, diverse, and inclusive VMI.
- Integrate financial aid, marketing, and cadet support services into an effective strategic enrollment unit.
- Provide quality academic and health / well-being support services to the Corps of Cadets.
- Advance capital investment to provide industry leading academic, athletic, cadet life, and administrative facilities.
- Explore value-added opportunities of expanding the Institute's exceptional leadership training model and reputation in new innovative ways.
- Deepen VMI's connection with alumni, donors, and parents/guardians.



# Prepare Exceptional Leaders

OBJECTIVES	TASKS	METRICS	NEW RESOURCES
Teach, coach, mentor, guide, and direct cadets through the VMI training model to help them develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to become effective leaders.	6	14	
Ensure cadets receive mentally and physically challenging experiences that lead to meaningful personal and professional development.	2	5	
Prepare cadets for a wide variety of opportunities for service upon graduation, such as commissioning in the US armed service and employment with governmental agencies or private industry.	6	27	✓
Increase opportunities for the VMI community to serve, debate ideas candidly and civilly, and nurture esprit de corps.	3	10	
Explore value-added opportunities of expanding the Institute's exceptional leadership training model and reputation in new innovative ways.	2	5	
Strengthen high-impact practices and experiential learning, such as undergraduate research, global learning, internships, and service-learning activities.	2	3	✓
A high performing Corps of Cadets who achieve their personal best.	2	5	✓



# Enhance Academic Excellence

OBJECTIVES	TASKS	METRICS	NEW RESOURCES
Enhance effective pedagogical approaches to promote cadet engagement and enhance academic achievement.	3	7	✓
Integrate and leverage new and innovative technology to improve our educational and organizational processes.	1	4	
Recruit, retain, and promote distinguished faculty with expertise in new and emerging fields.	2	5	✓
Strengthen high-impact practices and experiential learning, such as undergraduate research, global learning, internships, and service-learning activities.	5	8	✓
Enrich VMI's leadership development model with pertinent academic contributions.	1	2	





# Foster Esprit de Corps

OBJECTIVES	TASKS	METRICS	NEW RESOURCES
Create and champion a safe, secure, diverse, and inclusive VMI.	3	6	
Provide a supportive work environment that enhances employees' well-being through effective recruitment, onboarding, development, engagement, and compensation.	1	4	✓
Deepen VMI's connection with alumni, donors, and parents/guardians	3	7	
Provide experiential learning opportunities that will help cadets fully integrate within the VMI system, achieve their highest potential, and be productive members of a high-performing Corps of Cadets.	3	6	
Positively affect employee well-being	2	3	
Facilitate a supportive, respectful, and professional operating environment for cadets, faculty, staff, and alumni.	6	12	✓



# Recruit Top Cadets and Faculty

OBJECTIVES	TASKS	METRICS	NEW RESOURCES
Integrate financial aid, marketing, and cadet support services into an effective strategic enrollment unit.	1	4	✓
Be among the top five Virginia public institutions in retention and graduation rates.	2	2	✓
Provide quality academic and health/well-being support services to the Corps of Cadets.	1	1	✓



# Delivering 21<sup>st</sup> Century Infrastructure

OBJECTIVES	TASKS	METRICS	NEW RESOURCES
Strengthen and enhance overall sustainment, restoration, and modernization of facilities to support 21 <sup>st</sup> century requirements.	3	12	
Advance capital investment to provide industry leading academic, athletic, cadet life, and administrative facilities.	3	7	✓
Modernize and enhance post-wide safety and security.	2	3	
Advance efforts that foster a safe and secure environment for cadets, staff, and faculty of VMI.	2	2	
Integrate technology into our educational and organizational processes.	2	6	✓

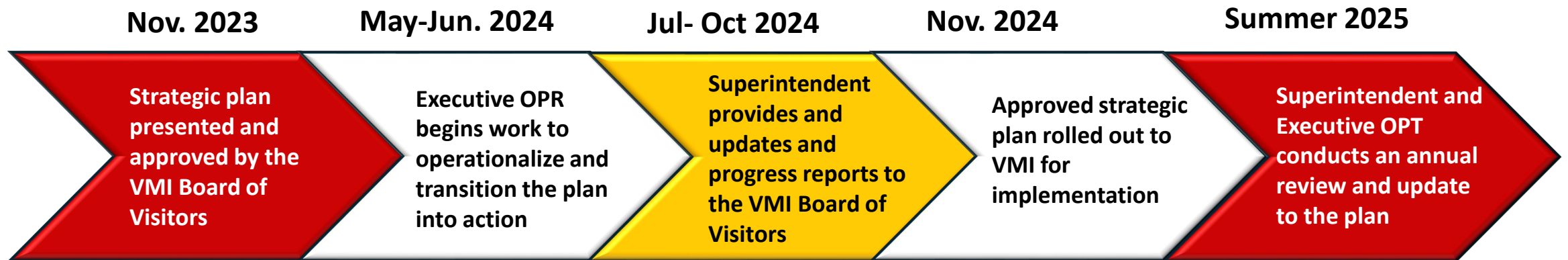


# Way Ahead

- There are currently five strategic initiatives, 27 objectives, 70 tasks, and 170 metrics.
- Continue to develop and refine the tasks and metrics over the next 90 days
- Develop and execute a strategic marketing strategy in conjunction with a third-party marketing firm.
- In conjunction with the VMI Alumni Agencies, developed a campaign to advance the priorities of the strategic plan.
- Establish and publish the battle rhythm for how we will execute the strategic plan.



# Way Ahead





# Summary

- High priority objectives have been identified by the superintendent.
- The tasks and metrics continue to be refined and are on track for review at the Sept. 2024, Board of Visitors meeting.
- Public rollout of the plan is anticipated on/about Founders Day 2024.



# Questions and Closing Comments





# Backup





# Prepare Exceptional Leaders

## Tasks

- \* Continuously improve Cadet leader development experience to produce authentic and adaptable graduates dedicated to public service.
- \* Identify/ track key leadership knowledge, skills, and self-reflective opportunities to guide leader development.
- \* Create and implement VMI cadet leader development assessment process that enables TACs, academic advisors, coaches to provide feedback/help cadets self-reflect /evaluate their key attributes and competencies.
- \* Review, modify, and enhance the leadership minor for relevance and applicability to leadership development.
- \* Explore the possibility of developing a leadership certificate program.
- \* Explore the establishment of a department of leadership to house all academic leadership programs, courses, and faculty.
- \* Ensure mentally and physically challenging leader development experiences embedded across VMI Journey.
- \* Evaluate and revise corps physical fitness program to streamline and reduce redundancies and encourage greater cadet fitness.
- \* Prepare cadets for service upon graduation (academic, physical, mental, competency requirements).
- \* Increase number of recruiters visiting VMI from government agencies or other non-profit organizations.
- \* Expand team-building opportunities for Cadets to confront challenges in mentally and physically demanding events. .
- \* Cadets demonstrate moral courage, abide by VMI values, and ethical behavior so that it becomes second nature.
- \* Expand opportunities to cadets to confront challenges in mentally, physically, and socially demanding events.
- \* Expand professional and experiential development to prepare cadets for life after VMI.
- \* Expand and continuously improve opportunities for institutional and community service for faculty/staff.
- \* Add debate topics and speaker opportunities each academic year that appeal to entire VMI community.
- \* Educate VMI faculty and staff on VMI history and reinforce memory of key events throughout the academic year.
- \* Conduct detailed feasibility study of continuing education and graduate opportunities.
- \* Examine existing and opportunities for mobile training teams or distance learning modules to export leadership training.
- \* Develop new courses or programs with embedded high-impact practices, as defined by American Association of Colleges and Universities.
- I\* Increase cadet participation in internships.
- \* Codify Cadet Leader development with accredited academics.
- \* Expand professional and experiential development to increase Faculty and Staff learning and prepare Cadets for life after VMI. (Near-term, low cost).



# Enhance Academic Excellence

## Tasks

- \* Increase faculty development in the science of learning and academic motivation. (Long-term, high cost, highest priority).
- \* Evaluate and revise, as needed, the core and major curricula to ensure relevance and effective pedagogies.
- \* Evaluate and improve teaching through evidence-based professional development.
- \* Improve organizational processes to facilitate rapid assimilation of new software and hardware technologies for integration across academic and institutional operations, including support for external grant-funded initiatives, to match the pace of evolving technology.
- \* Attract faculty who exemplify the highest standards of the Statement on Faculty Expectations in teaching, scholarly engagement, professional citizenship, and cadet development. Bring the average full-time salary to rank in the top five amongst all Virginia public colleges and universities by 2030.
- \* Incentivize teaching and research in emerging fields across the Academic Program.
- \* Develop new courses or programs with embedded high-impact practices, as defined by American Association of Colleges and Universities.
- \* Increase cadet participation in internships.
- \* Elevate VMI's approach to leader development to world renown status.
- \* Increase cadet participation in global learning. (Short Term, Low Cost).
- \* Examine the feasibility of adding Graduate programs to the curriculum to meet the future needs of graduates.



# Foster Esprit de Corps

## Tasks

- \* Enhance and maintain a robust and professional law enforcement, public safety, and emergency management presence on Post to address any potential threats.
- \* Foster moral courage with a bias for action to uphold what is right.
- \* Expand International Programs for short visits overseas.
- \* Develop and employ innovative recruiting techniques to attract diverse best qualified talent from the military, industry, and higher education to serve across the Institute's that understand their role in developing future citizen-soldiers, citizen-leaders.
- \* Collaborate with the Alumni Agency to emphasize the strategic importance of philanthropy that provides margin of excellence support.
- \* Expand and strengthen mentoring, networking and affinity programs that facilitate increased integration and sense of belonging within the VMI community.
- \* Advertise the deep devotion VMI parents have for the Institute.
- \* Expand and strengthen mentoring, networking and affinity programs that facilitate increased integration and sense of belonging within the VMI community.
- \* Cadets demonstrate moral courage, abide by VMI values, and ethical behavior so that it becomes second nature.
- \* Expand opportunities to cadets to confront challenges in mentally and physically demanding events.
- \* Review GO #1 to address time management, prioritization of learning, and opportunities for advancement
- \* Expand opportunities to cadets to confront challenges in mentally and physically demanding events
- \* Ensure a competitive total reward system, including compensation, benefits, recognition, and career growth programs which strengthens VMI as a desirable long-term career option.
- \* Increase professional development opportunities to develop and retain the Institute team members to learn and apply best practices in pedagogy, coaching and support services and to advance as experts in their fields.
- \* Advance efforts that foster a safe, diverse, and inclusive environment.
- \* A high performing Corps of Cadets who achieve their personal best.
- \* Effect Employee Well-being
- \* A devoted VMI family will be the result if we fully and enthusiastically support the above objectives.
- \* Increase morals, ethics, and values training for Corps and Employees.
- \* Achieve a sense of belonging and being part of something greater than yourself.



# Recruit Top Cadets and Faculty

## Tasks

- \* Develop a Cadet Recruitment and Retention Center under the purview of Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM).
- \* Conduct a holistic review of initial and continual cadet support programming.
- \* Develop a comprehensive retention, persistence and graduation plan.
- \* Integrate well-being services into one department (Infirmary, Counseling, Nutrition, and Athletic Trainers) and increase staffing to meet cadet needs.



# Delivering 21<sup>st</sup> Century Infrastructure

## Tasks

- \* Enhance and Maintain state-of-the art facilities that inspire and support the pursuit of academic, athletic, and professional excellence.
- \* Maintain the health, well-being and quality of life of the Corps of Cadets through regular investment in the Barracks and Crozet Hall.
- \* Modernize Information Technology infrastructure, services and support in alignment with digital trends and standards.
- \* Collaborate with the VMI Alumni Agencies to advance the capital improvement plan.
- \* Update Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) annually to include modernization plan for facilities.
- \* Collaborate with state and federal governmental relations partners to prioritize and secure funding for VMI's capital improvement plan.
- \* Upgrade Post-wide safety & security through completion of capital improvement projects.
- \* Complete the Barracks Cadet Safety & Security capital project.
- \* Complete the Barracks Cadet Safety & Security capital construction projects that address barracks safety – door locks, windows, etc..
- \* Enhance and maintain a robust and professional law enforcement, public safety, and emergency management presence on Post to address any potential threats.
- \* Improve organizational processes to facilitate rapid assimilation of new software and hardware technologies for integration across academic and institutional operations, including support for external grant-funded initiatives, to match the pace of evolving technology.
- \* Create hybrid classrooms that provide flexible, state-of-the-art instructional capabilities across the curriculum.