



# BOARD OF VISITORS

---

201 SMITH HALL, LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA 24450-0304

## Meeting Minutes February 6 – 8, 2025

A meeting of the Virginia Military Institute Board of Visitors was held in Lexington, Virginia beginning on February 6, 2025, pursuant to public notice.

### Board of Visitors members present:

John Adams '96	Jim Joustra '76
Ernie Edgar '87	Terry McKnight '78
Quintin Elliott '85	Meaghan Mobbs
Clifford Foster '93	Nancy Phillips
Conrad Garcia	Kate Todd
Teddy Gottwald '83	Tom Watjen '76
Jamie Inman '86	
Bill Janis '84	

### Board of Visitors members participating virtually:

Hugh Fain '80 (from New York)

### Board of Visitors members not present:

Damon Williams '90 (excused)

### Cadet advisory representative to the board present:

Cadet Turner Gallo '25

Thursday, February 6, 2025

---

*Meetings began at 2:00 p.m. and included a number of board committee meetings. Following the committee meetings, the full board convened.*

---

1. John Adams presided and called a meeting of the full Board of Visitors to order at 3:20 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 6, 2025. Also present were Maj. Gen. Cedric Wins '85, VMI superintendent, Patrick O'Leary, VMI legal counsel and senior assistant attorney general. Col. Bill Wyatt, board secretary recorded the minutes.

The meeting was streamed live and is archived on the VMI Board of Visitors' YouTube page: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A9TnUFk794A>

2. Adams made a motion, seconded by Tom Watjen, to enter closed session. The motion passed unanimously, and the board entered closed session at 3:21 p.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/or discussion of individual personnel matters.
  - b. 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).
3. The board returned to open session at 4:16 p.m. A motion was made by Mr. Garcia and seconded by Mr. Edgar to certify closed session. A roll call vote of members present was taken. All members voted to certify the closed session.

---

*Committee meetings constituted the remainder of Thursday, February 6, 2025.*

---

Friday, February 7, 2025

4. John Adams presided and called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. Also present were Maj. Gen. Cedric Wins '85, VMI superintendent, and Patrick O'Leary, VMI legal counsel and senior assistant attorney general. Col. Bill Wyatt, board secretary, recorded the minutes.

The meeting was streamed live and is archived on the VMI Board of Visitors YouTube page: <https://www.youtube.com/live/mCmDZUHmgs4?si=LR2IM3oc45tVnH7l>

Meeting materials for this meeting are archived at <https://www.vmi.edu/BOVmaterials>.

5. Adams reminded board members about the written comments that were submitted for the board's consideration. These comments were distributed to members through the board portal and are available to the public at <https://www.vmi.edu/BOVmaterials>. The comments are posted in the February 8, 2025, Board of Visitors meeting.

The board president also welcomed Cadet Turner Gallo, the cadet advisory representative to the Board of Visitors and first-class president.

6. Kate Todd noted her appointment had not yet been confirmed by the General Assembly. She said, if she is not confirmed, it has been a tremendous honor to serve on the board and to get to know VMI. She also noted the qualifications of board members Clifford Foster and Quintin Elliott as exceptional spokesmen for VMI.



7. Maj. Gen. Wins gave the board an [update on Institute activities](#) since the board last met. He discussed the following highlights:
  - a. VMI's POW-MIA's are remembered through the installation of a seat in Foster Stadium
  - b. VMI continued to climb in the U.S. News and World Report college rankings
  - c. The annual AMCSUS conference was held on post Sept. 23 – 25
  - d. Capt. Flo Groberg, Medal of Honor recipient, headlined the annual Leadership and Ethics Conference in October
  - e. Actor Gary Sinise helped the Institute celebrate Founder's Day
  - f. The VMI Ranger Challenge team took the bronze medal at the grueling Cambrian Patrol competition in Wales. VMI was the first ROTC team to complete the competition
  - g. Dr. Mattie Smith, instructor in English, Writing, and Rhetorical Studies, has been named Virginia's Poet Laureate
  - h. Chief Mike Marshall was recognized by his peers with the PELS Leadership Award upon completing the Professional Executive Leadership School
  - i. A number of annual events were held to close out the fall semester including Ring Figure, commissioning, and commencement
  - j. Governor Glenn Youngkin visited post in December, met with senior staff and cadet leaders, and granted amnesty to the Corps of Cadets
  - k. Col. Jim Squire will be recognized with a SCHEV Outstanding Faculty Award
  - l. VMI employees participated in training on neurodiversity in the workforce
  - m. Cadet Rickey Bradley Jr. authored a blog post about his return to VMI after leaving for the transfer portal
  - n. Speaker Don Scott and Del. Betsy Carr visited post for an Institute update briefing, tour of barracks, and a basketball game
  - o. The spring semester has a very busy calendar

Maj. Gen. Wins briefed the board on the inauguration parade. He said VMI was going to send close to 1,400 cadets to the parade. However, VMI was notified the Institute would not be participating due to the change in location. In order to recoup some sunk transportation costs, the commandant staff was able to quickly put together several day trips including to a Charlotte Hornets basketball game, the Massanutten Waterpark, and shopping in Short Pump.

VMI has been reaccredited by ABET (engineering) and AACSB (business). A team attended a kickoff event in Austin, Texas for the Institute's 10-year accreditation process through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

The superintendent introduced Col. Travis Homiak, USMC (retired) as the Institute's next chief of staff. Homiak is a member of the VMI Class of 1995 and a 30-year Marine Corps veteran. He holds three master's degrees and a Ph.D. in war studies from the Royal Military College of Canada.



8. Brig. Gen. Robert Moreschi, deputy superintendent for academics and dean of the faculty, provided an [update on academic performance](#) from the Fall 2024 semester. He provided historical data on the fall semester grade point averages for Rats. There was some discussion about the correlation between high school GPA and academic performance at VMI. The dean said that issue is being looked into.

VMI implemented the Cadet Academic Recovery (CAR) Program for cadets on academic probation last fall. Brig. Gen. Moreschi shared data on why cadets were placed on academic probation and how they fared in the CAR program. He also shared the numbers of cadets who will be on academic probation during the Spring 2025 semester.

Finally, the dean shared historical information regarding GPA by class. The data showed increases for each of the classes over the past five years.

9. Lt. Col. Ammad Sheikh, director of the Office of Career Services, [shared results](#) of the First Destinations of 2023-24 Graduates survey. The survey showed 95% of graduates were employed, volunteering, or in graduate school within six months of graduation.
10. Col. Shannon Eskam provided an [update on strategic enrollment management activities](#). She shared updates on procurement of retention software as well as an update on Call to Duty applications.

Lt. Col. Joe Hagy discussed the current admissions funnel numbers. He said the Institute is on track to bring in 515 rats. Admissions has made nearly 1,200 appointments for this cycle. He said they are on track to bring the acceptance rate back below 70%. Hagy also told the board the yield rate among applicants who use the VMI application visé the CommonApp is much higher and the number of applicants using the VMI application this year is higher than last.

Mr. Joustra noted the admissions numbers were trending up and asked to what Lt. Col. Hagy attributed the success. Hagy pointed to the larger applicant pool and being able to be more selective among those applicants who are most engaged with the Institute. Joustra asked if VMI is perceived more as a regional college. Hagy says we can always do better but said the VMI brand is recognized nationally and internationally thanks, in no small part, to VMI's alumni network.

Discussion ensued regarding increasing the number of international students. Col. Eskam said there are a number of challenges, especially with respect to visas, that the team is working through.

Eskam recapped the coming enrollment cliff and what VMI is doing to mitigate its effects on the Institute's enrollment. Adams noted the data of the cliff looks more like a gradual hill.



11. Col. Eskam and Brig. Gen. Dallas Clark '99 briefed the board on [affordability and tuition and fees](#). Eskam detailed the numbers of cadets and their out-of-pocket costs to attend VMI. She noted the different types of financial aid available to cadets and how that aid is distributed by the numbers. She also told the board about how tuition and fee increases affect each category of aid.

Brig. Gen. Clark provided information on VMI's revenue sources. He discussed enrollment projections used for developing the fiscal year 2026 Institute budget. Clark presented two options for setting tuition and fees for the coming academic year. One option included a 0% tuition increase and another included a 2.5% tuition increase. Fees under both options would increase 3%. Discussion of the anticipated expenses facing the Institute in the coming year followed. Brig. Gen. Clark also compared VMI's tuition increases over the years to the Higher Education Price Index and the Consumer Price Index. The comparison showed VMI's tuition and fee increases for in-state cadets lower than both indexes since 2021.

Kate Todd questioned whether the enrollment projections are too optimistic. Clark and Wins pointed to historical data that showed previous classes in the range or higher than the projection. Additionally, the numbers of increased applicants lead to a level of confidence for the coming year.

Finally, Brig. Gen. briefed the board on the Institute's pending General Assembly budget requests which include operational enhancements (\$785,000), academic enhancements (\$256,000), and unique military activities (\$750,000) as well as a capital request for the CLE Phase II (\$80.9 million).

12. Col. Ley Havird '90, commandant, briefed the board on [fall discipline trends](#). He said there was an increase in average demerits. He said the increase was due to the commandant staff's commitment to consistent enforcement of standards and a return to pre-Covid frequency of room and uniform inspections. Havird said 59 cadets will start the spring semester on conduct probation. The commandant's staff is teaching, coaching, and mentoring high demerit cadets.

Col. Havird said instances of gross misconduct were address through suspension when the instances occurred. Excessive demerits were dealt with at the end of the semester. Many received a one-year suspension that was held in abeyance. These cadets were allowed to come back for the spring semester with either a 70 demerit limit (upperclass cadets) or 79 demerit limit (Rats).

The commandant provided an update on community relations in the Diamond Hill neighborhood. He said there have been no significant parking or disciplinary concerns. VMI Police are conducting patrols of adjacent areas, and the commandant has periodic cross-checks with Lexington Police. Havird told the board Lexington City Council member,



Marilyn Alexander, thanked the superintendent at a January 2025 council meeting for efforts thus far to curb negative behaviors in the areas surrounding post.

Teddy Gottwald raised concerns about the growing average number of demerits of athletes vs. non-athletes. He said there is a perception that athletes are treated differently. Havird said there are many athletes are prone to accumulating a high level of demerits. He said the big area of indiscipline is being late to or missing class or formation. This has been a focus of coaching and mentoring sessions with the commandant. The commandant continues to work with the athletic director. Havird said he believes these efforts will affect demerit levels during the spring semester. Gottwald express skepticism about the effectiveness of the counseling efforts. Col. Havird encouraged a wait-and-see approach given the consistency with which his staff has been enforcing the standard.

13. Jamaal Walton '07, VMI director of athletics, briefed the board on the [Keydet for Life program](#). The program is designed to educate, prepare, and empower VMI cadet-athletes for success at the Institute and beyond. Components of the program include character and personal development, community service and citizen soldier development, and career and professional development.
14. The board recessed at 11:31 p.m.
15. The board reconvened at noon for an open discussion with the Academic Board. The discussion was moderated by the dean, Brig. Gen. Robert Moreschi. A video of the discussion is archived at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDw6A1xhSqs>.

Topics of discussion included admissions, enrollments in majors, quality and recruitment of applicants, artificial intelligence, faculty recruitment, post-graduation job placement, academic readiness, the status of ROTC programs, commitment to academic excellence, pedagogical development, and the Miller Academic Center.

---

*Committee meetings constituted the remainder of Friday, February 7, 2025.*

---

16. The Board of Visitors reconvened on Saturday, February 8, 2025 at 8 a.m. Quintin Elliott and Clifford Foster were not present as the General Assembly did not confirm their appointments within 30 days of the beginning of the legislative session. Also present were Maj. Gen. Cedric Wins '85, VMI superintendent, Patrick O'Leary, VMI legal counsel and senior assistant attorney general. Col. Bill Wyatt, board secretary recorded the minutes. A video of the day's proceedings is archived at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WpYfOPJFJws>.
17. John Adams opened the meeting by telling the board Quintin Elliott and Clifford Foster had not been confirmed by the General Assembly. He stated both appointees were imminently



qualified and outstanding members of the board. Adams said the board is worse off because of the General Assembly's decision.

Teddy Gottwald expressed concern about a member of the General Assembly calling members of the Board of Visitors and threatening the Institute's funding if certain actions were not taken. He reminded board members they were appointed to do a job and the political meddling is not helpful.

Adams reminded board members of the most important item of business for the day: Beat Citadel!

18. Maj. Gen. Cedric Wins '85, VMI superintendent, introduced the cadet leaders who each made brief remarks. The cadet leaders included Regimental Commander Brian Pritchard from Thornton, Colorado, first class president Cadet Turner Gallo from Stuart, FL and Honor Court president Cadet Elijah Alberti of Chancellorsville, Virginia.
19. David Prasnicky, CEO of the VMI Alumni Agencies, updated the board on the Agencies structure and major activities of the past semester. Prasnicky gave an overview of their fundraising costs and gave a comparison to other institutions. He said the endowment now exceeds \$800 million.
20. A motion was made to adopt the consent calendar by Ernie Edgar and seconded by Jamie Inman. The motion passed unanimously. The consent calendar included the following items:
  - a. [Approval of minutes from Sept. 16-18, 2024](#)
  - b. [Approval of changes in faculty](#)
  - c. [Approval of graduates](#)
  - d. [Approval of curricular changes](#)
  - e. [Approval of faculty salary guidelines](#)
21. Jamie Inman '86, chair of the Academic Affairs Committee, provided a report on the committee meeting. The committee discussed the SACSCOC reaffirmation process including providing guidance to the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) Ideation Committee to consider academic readiness as a priority issue. Inman said the committee continued to discuss the Institute's admissions standards and hopes to provide the board with a proposal for consideration at the May 2025, meeting. The committee also discussed the timing of the merit scholarship notification and encouraged the Institute to develop an option for earlier notification.
22. Terry McKnight '78 provided a report on the Athletics Committee meeting. The committee discussed disciplinary issues related to cadet-athletes. He said coordination among the commandant and athletic director has increased. All of the key indicators for the athletic budget including revenue generation are all positive. The committee heard from the football coach, Danny Rocco, who discussed the impact of the House settlement and NIL on the



football program.

John Adams emphasized the importance of a March 1, 2025, decision deadline for opting into or out of the NCAA House settlement. He asked that the board be kept apprised of any advice the Institute receives regarding the settlement.

23. Teddy Gottwald '83, chair of the Audit, Finance, and Planning Committee, provided a report of the committee's meeting.

[A motion was made by Teddy Gottwald](#) and seconded by Ernie Edgar to adopt the FY 2025 operating budget amendments. The motion passed unanimously.

[A motion was made by Teddy Gottwald](#) and seconded by Tom Watjen to adopt the 2025 Post Facilities Master Plan. The motion passed unanimously.

Gottwald told the board the committee heard from the VMI Alumni Agencies who discussed the numbers of donors and money raised this year. The emergency manager provided an update to the committee. Finally, the committee discussed the FY 2026 operating budget and tuition and fees for the 2025-26 academic year. He said the committee is concerned with the disparity between in-state and out-of-state costs and asked the staff to develop a series of budget cuts for the committee to review if a zero percent increase were to be considered.

The board discussed the broad responsibilities of the Audit, Finance, and Planning Committee. The committee doesn't feel as though there's enough time to sufficiently explore the many areas for which the committee has oversight.

24. Ernie Edgar '87, chair of the Corps and Military Affairs Committee, said the committee received updates from the Officer of the Guard Association and the cadet regimental staff. The committee also received an update on cadet activities and club sports. The commandant briefed the committee on fall semester discipline, cadet physical fitness, leadership, and training and experiential learning.
25. Meaghan Mobbs, chair of the Cadet and Personnel Affairs Committee, told the board about the committee meeting on Friday, February 7, 2025. She said the committee heard from Human Resources and Strategic Enrollment Management. The committee also heard from a representative who discussed employee wellness. The committee had a lot of discussion about coordinating across the various disciplines over which the committee has oversight.
26. Nancy Phillips, chair of the External Relations Committee, said the committee received an update on the VMI Museum System, the Institute's government relations efforts, and communications and marketing efforts. She said the committee continues to ask about the status of a crisis communications firm. The Jonathan Daniels Humanitarian Award Committee has met to consider nominees and expects to bring forth name(s) for board





consideration at the May 2025 meeting.

27. Hugh Fain '80, chair of the Appeals Committee, said the committee reviewed the Honor Court appeal process. They received reports from members of the Honor Court who told the committee about the court's education efforts. The committee had a discussion about artificial intelligence and how the Honor Court is addressing this emerging technology.
28. Conrad Garcia, chair of the Nominations and Governance Committee, said the committee reviewed the board bylaws. He said the bylaws also need to be reviewed to ensure compliance with accreditation standards. The committee also discussed the board officer nomination process and the process for nominating individuals to serve on or be reappointed to the board. The committee discussed whether the function of nominating board officers should be the responsibility of the committee or a responsibility of the Executive Committee.
29. Enter closed session. A motion was made by Ernie Edgar and seconded by Jim Joustra to enter closed session. The motion passed unanimously, and the board entered closed session at 9:41 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/or 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).
  - 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).
30. Return to open session. A motion was made by Bill Janis 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 and the board returned to open session at 12:06 p.m.
31. Nancy Phillips made a motion to amend the September 10, 2023, memorandum regarding the Moses Ezekiel Arlington monument to allow the Institute to accept private funds for the



project. [Bill Janis made a substitute motion](#), seconded by Nancy Phillips, that adds language to allow the Institute to advance funds as necessary for the project to be reimbursed from public or private funds. The motion passed unanimously.

32. At 12:10 p.m., the board president entertained a motion to adjourn and to beat Citadel. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.