

2023 SIX-YEAR PLAN NARRATIVE (Part II)

INSTITUTION: Virginia Military Institute

OVERVIEW

The six-year plan should describe the institution's goals as they relate to the Commonwealth's goals as articulated in the *Pathways to Opportunity: The Virginia Plan for Higher Education*; the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2011 (TJ21); the Restructured Higher Education Financial and Administrative Operations Act of 2005; and the Governor's objectives to prepare every graduate for success in life. Please use this opportunity to outline your institution's plans and objectives, especially as they relate to the Commonwealth's goals.

The instructions within the institutional mission and priorities section below ask for specific strategies related to affordability and access to quality postsecondary education that prepare students for success in life. Other sections offer institutions the opportunity to describe additional strategies to advance institutional goals and Commonwealth needs.

Please be comprehensive but as concise as possible with responses; you are encouraged to use bullet points vs. prose. Consider this a starting point for the dialogue with OpSix; you will have the opportunity to further elaborate on the narrative in your review sessions later this summer.

Please save this narrative document with your institution's name added to the file name.

SECTION A: MISSION & PRIORITIES

Key question: What are your institution's unique strengths and how do those inform your strategic priorities?

A1. What is your institutional mission? Please share any plans you have to change your mission over the six-year period.

Established by the Virginia General Assembly in 1839, the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) is a four-year, state-supported college whose student body is organized as a military corps under the command of the Superintendent. The Governor of Virginia is VMI's Commander in Chief.

VMI is the oldest state-supported military college in the United States. It exists as an in-person, undergraduate-only institution focused on producing educated, honorable men and women, ready as citizen-soldiers to defend their country in time of national peril.

As a wholly undergraduate military college, VMI meets society's need for educated citizens and leaders and contributes significantly to the diversity of the Commonwealth's system of state-supported, independent institutions of higher education (15 senior institutions and 24 two-year colleges). The Institute's mission statement amplifies VMI's special statutory role.

VMI 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 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.

To accomplish this result, Virginia Military Institute shall provide to qualified young men and women an undergraduate education of the highest quality -- embracing engineering, science, and the arts -- conducted in, and facilitated by, the unique VMI system of military discipline.

Honor, excellence, self-discipline, courage, esprit de corps, selfless service, and resilience combine as VMI's values.

Annually, the VMI Board of Visitors reviews, reaffirms, or amends (as appropriate), the mission of the Institute.

There are no plans to change the Institute's mission in the next six years.

A2. What are your institution's greatest strengths and areas of distinctiveness that it should continue to invest in? What are your institution's greatest opportunities for improvement?

Strengths/Distinctiveness

VMI has many great strengths and factors that contribute to its distinctiveness. It is an in-person, undergraduate-only institution focused on producing educated, honorable men and women, ready as citizen-soldiers. As a military institution, VMI makes a unique contribution to the diversity of the Commonwealth's system of state-supported and independent institutions of higher education as it contributes to meeting society's need for educated citizens and leaders.

As of Fall 2022, the Institute enrolled 1,512 cadets from 48 states, District of Columbia, and 9 countries. The population comprised 13.4% women, 6.7% Black/African American, 8.2% Hispanic, and 5.4% Asian or Pacific Islander. The ratio of cadets to faculty was 9.1 to 1.

VMI offers 14 majors (listed below) and a highly focused and personalized educational experience. Currently, VMI does not offer certificate programs or graduate degrees but may consider such in the future. The academic program consists of a demanding curriculum across all 19 degree programs within 14 majors which require 136 to 140 credit hours for graduation (above the national average of 120) or the equivalent of nine semesters of coursework completed in eight semesters.

Additionally, the Institute's leadership development focus includes comprehensive activities within Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), daily formations, fitness training, ceremonies and parades, NCAA and club sports, and involvement in various leadership roles.

VMI Degree Programs

Engineering

Civil Engineering	B.S.
Electrical & Computer Engineering	B.S.
Mechanical Engineering	B.S.

Natural Sciences

Applied Mathematics	B.S.
Biology	B.A.
Biology	B.S.
Chemistry	B.A.
Chemistry - Pre-Medical Track	B.S.
Chemistry - Research Track	B.S.
Computer Science - Theory and Application Track	B.S.
Computer Science - Cybersecurity Track	B.S.
Computer Science - Information Technology Track	B.S.
Physics	B.S.

Arts & Humanities

English	B.A.
History	B.A.
Modern Languages & Cultures	B.A.

Social Sciences

Economics & Business	B.A.
International Studies & Political Science	B.A.
Psychology	B.S.

The Institute's three greatest strengths are its:

1. Leader development model
2. Premier academic program
3. Strong sense of community and lifelong commitment to the Institute

Leader development model. The country's need for leaders of character is immense and VMI serves this need by developing men and women who think and act ethically, lead by example, inspire confidence, and are willing to work hard to achieve their goals. They endure rigorous training that promotes resilience and perseverance all within the construct of VMI's leader development model. This development model has produced Rhodes Scholars, numerous general and flag officers, captains of industry, a civil rights martyr, and scores of citizen-soldiers prepared to defend the nation.

Successful completion of VMI's unique educational system enables cadets to enter the armed forces, civilian professions, or to continue at graduate and professional schools. Approximately 98% of each class has full-time employment or has entered graduate school within five months of graduation, with greater than 50% of graduates accepting a military commission. Notably, VMI's officer commissioning rate is among the top 5 in the nation for all branches of service.

VMI's facilities include a robust system of leadership training initiatives (obstacle courses, leadership reaction course, high and low rope courses, and access to various exercise trails and remote lands for field training exercises) that are a significant component of the overall educational model specific to leader development.

Premier Academic Program. VMI has a renowned reputation for its commitment to highly personalized educational experiences. With average class sizes of around 16 or fewer and a cadet-to-faculty ratio of about 9 to 1, VMI is a standout among competitors in providing engaging learning experiences. VMI's core curriculum, the nucleus of effective leadership, is both broad and comprehensive in scope. Key competencies include critical and creative thinking, written and oral communication, quantitative reasoning, scientific analysis, and physical education.

VMI's full-time faculty are leaders in their disciplines and in the classroom, and three have received the SCHEV Outstanding Faculty Award within the past five years. Performance domains include teaching, research, cadet development, and service. Faculty are hired and developed as "teachers/mentors to cadets first, scholars second." All VMI faculty are deeply engaged in scholarship, both their own and mentoring undergraduate research. Faculty are available to help cadets both in the classroom and out. The teaching culture is one of mentorship. Faculty routinely make themselves available to cadets in the evenings and weekends.

The VMI community. The entirety of the VMI community, to include faculty, staff, cadets, and alumni, deliberately accepts and promotes their connection to the Institute. The strong sense of belonging is a hallmark of VMI directly connected to recruitment, retention, job placement, post-graduation networking, and a long-term connection and service to the Institute including philanthropic support. Often described as the "bonds of VMI," these lifelong connections extend to the VMI community and are a significant part of one's VMI experience from day one. The

bonding occurs through adherence to the mission and values and their inculcation into the daily schedule and individual lives of the cadets.

The involvement of alumni through service and philanthropy to the Institute has direct financial impact on the ability to sustain and deliver excellence in all aspects of the VMI Mission.

Graduates of VMI are connected closely with each other but also to the Commonwealth of Virginia and the nation through service in the military and state and federal governmental agencies (e.g., intelligence services and the diplomatic corps).

VMI's rural location along the Appalachian Mountains in the heart of the Shenandoah Valley in an Appalachian Designated County provides some of the most beautiful natural resources the state has to offer.

The characteristics of this strong community attract faculty, staff, and cadets to VMI. Graduates of the Institute remain steadfastly involved and connected to each other and to the institution.

Opportunities for Improvement

A confluence of factors, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the negative publicity from the state-initiated Equity Audit, had a negative impact on VMI's enrollment. In Fall 2022, enrollment was approximately 1,500 cadets, about 200 cadets fewer than typical. Since VMI does not have a graduate school and does not enroll cadets in non-fall semesters, the ability to offset the financial shortfall presented a challenge.

VMI's greatest opportunities for improvement include the following:

1. Build and maintain a Corps strength of more than 1,700 cadets by using national recruitment strategies and implementing a new enrollment management model.
 - a. Prepare for changes in college enrollment trends (monitor and respond to changes in student preferences, as well as birth rates and high school graduation rates).
 - b. Implement new strategies that promote greater cadet success – i.e., increase retention and graduation rates.
2. Increase opportunities for high impact learning experiences including internships and service to the Commonwealth and nation.
3. Improve brand strength with new Institute marketing efforts.
4. Implementation of the VMI Strategic Plan.

A3. What are the top 3-5 strategic priorities you are currently pursuing or planning to pursue in the next six years? Please explain how each strategy relates to the strengths and/or opportunities for improvement mentioned above and will ultimately drive better outcomes for students.

The VMI Board of Visitors began the process of updating the Institute's strategic plan in Fall 2022. Focus groups comprised of VMI faculty, staff, and cadets met regularly to determine the highest strategic priorities in the areas of military, academics, athletics, and culture/environment. Simultaneously, VMI alumni, parents, cadets, and other stakeholders completed a survey in which they shared priorities that they believed were most important for the future of VMI. The

focus groups produced draft reports detailing strategic priorities, and they presented them to the VMI executive committee, along with results from the stakeholder survey. In January 2023, the Strategic Plan Steering Committee conducted a retreat to synthesize and incorporate feedback from all stakeholder groups into the strategic plan. The culmination of this effort resulted in five strategic initiatives and dozens of corresponding objectives and metrics. The five initiatives are provided below along with an abbreviated list of objectives.

1. Prepare Exceptional Leaders

- Expand leadership training and educational experiences (e.g., new courses, additional faculty, and state-of-the-art leader development methods and facilities).
- Expand recruitment opportunities for service to the nation upon graduation (Commissioning, government agencies, and non-profit organizations).
- Ensure future leaders receive a well-rounded, exceptional educational experience in general education courses, with emphasis on math, communication, scientific reasoning, history, the Constitution, and civics.

2. Enhance Academic Excellence

- Develop innovative pedagogical approaches to promote cadet engagement and enhance academic achievement.
- Integrate new educational technology.
- Strengthen high impact practices (internships, undergraduate research, global learning, service learning).

3. Recruit Top Cadets and Boost Success

- Return to an overall enrollment of 1,733 (at census date) cadets through the adoption of a strategic enrollment management model (new staff, enhanced analytics, and reorganization of support units).
- Improve retention and graduation rates to be among the best in the Commonwealth (new technology/analytics, additional academic support coordinators, and reorganization of support units)
- Invest in financial aid programs and privately funded scholarships to attract the desired mix of in-state and out-of-state targets for all classes.
- Prioritize affordability of tuition and fees in budget process with growth levels equal to or less than the Higher Education Price Index, annually.

4. Foster Esprit de Corps

- Achieve and maintain average Teaching and Research faculty salaries among the top five Virginia publics.
- Adopt a new Administrative/Professional faculty compensation model to achieve salary satisfaction on par with Teaching and Research faculty.
- Advance efforts that foster a safe, diverse, and inclusive environment.
- Using the Superintendent's statement on free speech, engage cadets and the VMI community in enhancing civil discourse through classroom practice and exposure to invited speakers who address challenging topics.

5. Exceptional Facilities

- Update the Capital Improvement Plan annually to include a modernization plan of facilities.
- Strengthen and enhance overall facilities maintenance.

An alignment map of VMI’s strategic initiatives and the strengths and opportunities outlined in A2 is presented in the table below.

Strategic Initiatives	Strength 1 Leader Development	Strength 2 Premier Academic Program	Strength 3 The VMI Community	Opp. 1 Enrollment	Opp. 2 Expand Service/Internships	Opp. 3 Brand Strength
Prepare Exceptional Leaders	X	X	X		X	X
Enhance Academic Excellence	X	X	X	X	X	
Recruit Top Cadets & Enrich Success	X	X	X	X	X	X
Foster Esprit de Corps		X	X	X		
Exceptional Facilities	X	X	X	X		

Recent enrollment decreases have prompted VMI to adopt a strategic enrollment management model that integrates admissions, financial aid, marketing, and cadet support. This model is designed to not only recruit talented cadets, but also enhance their success. Actions in the Academic Excellence initiative build on and reinforce this approach by working to enhance cadets’ academic motivation in the classroom and by strengthening high impact practices like internships and study abroad, activities that, according to research from the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U), increase the likelihood of retention and success.

VMI’s cadet leadership development model is one of its greatest strengths. Improving the model, expanding opportunities for service to the nation, and ensuring well-rounded general education experience will ensure that VMI enhances cadet success post-graduation and produces honorable, educated, ready-to-lead citizen-soldiers.

The VMI brand benefits from successes in these aforementioned areas. The more VMI demonstrates its value to the public, the easier it becomes to recruit and retain the best and brightest cadets, faculty, and staff.

Esprit de Corps is synonymous with morale. Sense of community and market-appropriate compensation for faculty and staff are important factors contributing to morale and enhance efforts to foster a safe, diverse, and inclusive environment. These efforts will be aligned with the Commonwealth's (published) Diversity, Opportunity, and Inclusion strategic plan. Exceptional facilities supports morale as well. Properly maintained and equipped facilities engender a sense of pride within the community and help recruit talented prospective cadets and faculty.

A4. What support can OpSix provide to help you achieve those strategies? Please include both budget and policy requests and reference Part I of your submission where appropriate.

Funding requests to support VMI's strategic initiatives are provided below. They are not indicative of all actions that VMI is pursuing in its new strategic plan. Funding support for these initiatives is integral to short-term successes and will thus make long-term success more likely.

Prepare Exceptional Leaders: Execute the premier leadership development program in the nation and develop a Corps of Cadets that is mentally tough, academically astute, and physically fit, with the Rat Line and Regimental, Class, and Honor Systems as the foundational backbone.

- Funding support for a new, full-time faculty member in the History Department to support the addition of a course in American Constitutional History to the Core Curriculum.
- Funding to construct the Center for Leadership and Ethics Phase II and bring together portions of the leadership development program and the VMI Museum in a new facility, allowing them to share resources, collaborate on programming, and grow the leadership development experience.

Enhance Academic Excellence: Produce the Nation's and the Commonwealth's future leaders with contemporary education and training.

- Funding to support an employer relations/internship coordinator position in the Office of Career Services that supports increased internship opportunities.
- Funding to reduce adjuncts teaching of general education courses and replace them with full-time lecturers who receive on-going professional development in the science of human learning and academic motivation.
- Funding to support a new full-time support staff position in the Office of Global Education to expand the opportunities for global education provided to cadets.

Recruit Top Cadets and Boost Success: Recruit and retain talented cadets who embody VMI's core values of honor, courage, and excellence.

- Funding for ongoing support of a new full-time staff position to lead the strategic enrollment management office (synchronize key enrollment management functions across the Institute, including marketing, admissions, and financial aid) provided through SCHEV's initiative (4-year award) to enhance recruitment and retention of Pell-eligible students.

- Funding to support new technology and analytics that help predict cadet success, assist with earlier and more frequent interventions.
- Funding to support an Associate Dean for Academic Support to lead the offices and programs promoting academic success, retention, and timely progress toward degree completion for all cadets.
- Funding for ongoing support of two new academic support coordinators provided through SCHEV's initiative (4-year award) to enhance recruitment and retention of Pell-eligible students.
- Increase affordability through more state financial aid funding.
- Adjust SCHEV's financial aid formula to focus on demonstrated need instead of unmet need.

Foster Esprit de Corps: Facilitate a supportive, respectful, and professional operating environment for cadets, faculty, staff, and alumni.

- Funding to support VMI's goal to achieve the average Teaching and Research faculty salaries among the top 5 Virginia publics.
- Funding to support a new Administrative/Professional faculty compensation model that helps achieve more competitive compensation.

Exceptional Facilities: Advance capital investments in facility maintenance, operations, physical plant and auxiliary facilities to advance VMI's academic, military, and athletics priorities.

- Funding to support investment in facilities maintenance and capital improvements.

See section K for suggestions on policy changes.

SECTION B: STRATEGIC DEEP DIVE – ENROLLMENT VOLUME & COMPOSITION

Key question: How is your institution managing enrollment in light of state and national trends, and what are the financial implications?

B1. What do you see as the primary drivers of recent enrollment trends for your institution? Please reference any specific academic programs that have had a significant (positive or negative) effect on enrollment, if relevant.

Opportunities:

- Implementation of new programs (e.g., Call to Duty Scholarship program which provides an award to cover VMI's housing and food costs to recipients of three and four-year ROTC national scholarships) have attracted more prospective cadets with an affinity to attend VMI than in previous years. Additionally, these efforts have neutralized any competitive advantage that other Senior Military Colleges had over VMI through similar programs.

- The ongoing integration of admissions, financial aid, and enrollment marketing has streamlined both departmental and cross-departmental processes. This action has created a clearer and more intentional approach to recruitment.
- Shifting the Institute’s recruitment strategy towards prospective cadets with an affinity for a world-class education in a military environment has increased conversion rates and output from the admissions funnel.

Challenges:

- The propensity to serve in the U.S. military has declined to its lowest level in more than a decade. Reports are fewer young Americans want to serve, and fewer are qualified.
- Updating the admissions and recruiting infrastructure and strategies in a timely manner so VMI can meet its recruitment and enrollment goals.
- Applications to the federal service academies and their preparatory schools have decreased resulting in increased competition as the service academies’ wait lists are reduced.
- National demographic and resulting enrollment trends and more specific enrollment for males is declining. VMI has a predominantly male student population.
- College application rates have not returned to pre-pandemic levels and high school graduates continue to have more post-secondary education/training options than in previous years.
- The negative publicity resulting from the state-initiated Equity Audit has affected the brand reputation of VMI.
- Affordability by limiting tuition and fee increases while simultaneously enhancing the Institute’s comprehensive offerings.

B2. Please summarize your enrollment management strategy moving forward and the specific actions (if any) you are taking to implement that strategy.

Strategic enrollment management focuses efforts on the recruitment, retention, and graduation of cadets consistent with the Institute’s mission, vision, values, and strategic plan. VMI is implementing a strategic enrollment management framework that synchronizes key functions across the Institute, including marketing, admissions, financial aid, academic achievement, and retention.

VMI is improving the communication and coordination of the Admissions and Financial Aid Offices. A primary strategy is a targeted national “all hands” admissions recruitment plan. Aligning various on Post departments and personnel with VMI alumni chapter networks will broaden and strengthen recruitment efforts. This recruiting strategy will be coupled with integrated recruitment software that provides targeted messaging and leverages financial aid award offers.

VMI has a robust honors program (Institute Honors) that provides merit aid (Institute Scholarships, using private funds) to outstanding applicants. Candidates for these scholarships must complete a secondary application and interview with a faculty selection committee. In the past academic year, the dean’s office coordinated with Admissions and Financial Aid to become

proactive in extending awards earlier in the admissions process. In addition, private funds are now available to provide merit scholarships to excellent applicants who are not provided an Institute Scholarship nor extended an offer to join the Honors program. VMI anticipates that having an earlier award notification window and providing merit aid to worthy applicants who are not offered entry to the honors program will boost the overall yield of this applicant pool.

B3. How ambitious/realistic/conservative are the enrollment projections you most recently submitted to SCHEV? What are the greatest unknowns or risks that could lead enrollment to differ significantly from your projections? Please reference national and statewide enrollment trends/projections and cite any other data (e.g. regional trends, performance of prior enrollment strategies) that informed your projections.

VMI is mindful of trend data that projects enrollment difficulties for colleges in the future and show males, a large demographic at VMI, are enrolling in college less frequently than in previous years. The Institute remains optimistic it can attain its goals based on the new initiatives already being implemented. For example, with the addition of the Common Application, most schools see a natural increase in application numbers, and it is expected application numbers will continue to increase as compared to pre-pandemic levels from this change alone. However, the new recruitment strategies are believed to also help account for these unknown trends. In addition, the value of VMI in terms of return on investment, salary post-graduation, and VMI's commitment to having cadets commission into one of the branches of the armed services remains high. Therefore, the Institute's recruitment and retention strategies will also focus on strategy to help clarify the value of a college education to potential and existing cadets.

VMI's goal is to incrementally improve enrollment numbers from an overall Corps size of approximately 1,500 to 1,733 by 2029-2030. This is achievable because:

- VMI has made recent enhancements to its Admissions and Financial Aid operations, including new directors in each unit. One premise of enrollment management is to leverage financial aid in terms of recruitment and retention while also working on more targeted approaches to recruitment in general. Additionally, enrollment marketing is now part of the admissions and financial aid strategy to help streamline communications and track enrollment and recruitment initiatives.
- Preliminary Fall 2023 Admissions data indicate that anticipated matriculation numbers are well ahead of last year's decade low of 374. This success is due in part to the new strategies in place by Admissions and Financial Aid. Through their combined approach to recruitment, VMI expects to matriculate an incoming class on par with historical entering classes even before all the new initiatives are fully implemented (see below).
- VMI is undertaking efforts to implement the frameworks of strategic enrollment management through multiple changes in its existing structure. First, as mentioned, the targeted and combined efforts by Admissions and Financial Aid will continue to be developed and enhanced. VMI will add the Common Application as an option for prospective cadets to use to apply for admission and believes it will ease the burden of

completing multiple admission applications by letting prospective cadets submit one application to multiple schools. VMI is also changing the internal admissions application form through the implementation of a customer relationship management program (CRM). This action will further reduce barriers to admissions by easing the process for high school graduates and transfer students while simultaneously improving communication. As most of these processes have been historically completed manually, the CRM will allow for automatic communication, better data utilization, and improved admissions funnel management to help move prospective cadets through the process at VMI.

VMI intends to reconfigure cadet support to enhance academic achievement (retention/graduation) without sacrificing academic rigor. This effort correlates back to the strategic enrollment management model where a more holistic approach will help retain and graduate students. VMI will identify and help at-risk cadets earlier and provide a clearer path towards successful course completion and graduation through improving access to academic resources, early alerts management for at-risk cadets, and better communication across Post.

B4. Explain the implications of your enrollment strategy on your institution's financials. Please consider impacts on both revenues (e.g., discounting, financial aid, net tuition revenue) and expenditures (e.g., costs to implement enrollment management strategies, costs of enrolling more students or students with different needs, cost-per-student impact of flat/decreased enrollment).

VMI's annual enrollment goals are to maintain an average fall/spring Corps size of approximately 1,625 cadets, based on Barracks capacity, with 55% in-state and 45% out-of-state. VMI historically matriculates 500 first-year cadets. Smaller than average classes in FY2022 and FY2023 will have a multi-year effect on overall tuition and fee revenues as these classes progress through their cadetships toward graduation.

As a result of lower enrollments and corresponding tuition revenue, VMI is reducing expenditures and is projected to utilize portions of its fund balance through FY2026 to provide balanced budgets. VMI will not reduce its robust need-based financial aid. VMI strives to provide 100% of demonstrated financial need to Virginians through federal loans, scholarships and grants for cadets meeting the priority application deadline of 1 March. The Institute also intends to continue awarding additional (merit) financial aid through the Call to Duty Scholarship program, which provides an award to cover VMI's housing and food costs to recipients of three-year and four-year ROTC national scholarships, as funding allows.

SECTION C: STRATEGIC DEEP DIVE – PROGRAM ALIGNMENT & PERFORMANCE

COMPLETION OUTCOMES

Key question: How is your institution supporting all students to succeed in completing their degree in a timely manner?

C1. What are your highest-priority completion outcomes targets, both overall and for particular student segments? Please include aspirational targets, realistic expectations, and qualitative targets and specify by when you are aiming to meet those targets (e.g., X% 6-year graduation rate for Pell students by 2030).

VMI's baccalaureate education is organized so that qualified cadets with no prior post-secondary experience can complete degree requirements within four years of matriculation. In special circumstances, however, the Institute permits cadets to extend their residency to five years and/or to complete their degree requirements in absentia up to 10 years. Nearly all cadets graduate within six years of enrolling.

VMI monitors aggregated retention and graduation rates within the institution and in relation to peer institutions using data compiled by SCHEV. VMI's peer institutions for this purpose include the 14 other four-year, publicly funded colleges and universities in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

VMI has very respectable retention and graduation rates. The most recent six-year graduation rate is 77%, which is 15-points above the national average (NSC, 2016 cohort) and three-points higher than the previous cohort. Among Virginia four-year public institutions, VMI's graduation rate is five-points higher than the average. However, the most recent retention rate was 82% (2021 cohort, FTF), which is 10th place among Virginia Publics, 15-points below the frontrunner, and 5-points lower than the previous cohort.

In Fall 2022, underrepresented cadets comprised about 37% of VMI's population, 8-points higher than in Fall 2014. There were no differences in the most recent (2016 cohort) six-year graduation rates for underrepresented cadets vs. their counterparts (78%). However, retention rates in the last two years are more dissimilar than desired (76% underrepresented populations vs 84% non-underrepresented populations, 2021 cohort).

Examining the most recent data available, cadets who receive the Pell Grant (~15%) show similar disparities in retention rates (73% Pell vs. 84% non-Pell, 2021 cohort). Pell Grant recipients' most recent 6-year graduation rates are close, but slightly lower than, their counterparts (75% vs. 77%, 2016 cohort).

In general, there are no concerning long-term graduation or retention trends in the aggregate, but VMI will continue monitoring certain underrepresented groups, particularly Black/African American and Asian cadets, closely. Retention rates for these two groups is significantly lower than the overall rate of 82% (2021 cohort, FTF), coming in at 68% and 74%, respectively.

Notably, it's not uncommon for Black cadet rates to fluctuate dramatically from year to year. For example, 70% of Black cadets were retained in Fall 2019, 87% in Fall 2020, and 68% in Fall 2021. Unlike the recent peak and valley shape of Black cadet rates, Asian cadet rates have steadily decreased in the last three years, moving from 92% in Fall 2019 to 86% in Fall 2020 and

74% in Fall 2021. The last time this group's rates were in the 70s was Fall 2018, before that, Fall 2013, otherwise being in the 80s, 90s, or 100%.

Of positive note, Hispanic/Latino retention rates are trending upward, moving from 64% in Fall 2019 to 77% in Fall 2020 and 85% in Fall 2021, the highest since Fall 2016.

Examining graduation rates by biological sex, data shows that both males and females have, generally, been near or above 70%, especially within the last five years. Males tend to graduate at higher rates than females, but that was not the case most recently (84%(f) vs. 76%(m), 2016 cohort). Retention rates for both groups have been historically similar, with differences of only a few percentage points. The most recent retention rate for females was 84%, males 81% (2021 cohort); the year prior it was 85% female, 87% male.

VMI currently provides a wide variety of academic support services, to include faculty serving as academic advisors, tutoring services in written and oral communication (from The Writing Center), in math (Math Education Resource Center), and learning support services from the professional staff of the Miller Academic Center. In addition, NCAA athletes have access to weekly academic mentoring. These services are offered at no cost to cadets but use is generally on a voluntary basis.

VMI realizes that to be able to make a sincere attempt at improving retention and graduation rates, additional resources will need to be available for a variety of academic support services. Funding from the state for the *One Corps, One VMI* initiative provided resources to hire three additional academic support personnel. In addition, the resources that will be available due to the state funding VMI's application for the recruitment and retention of Pell-eligible students will provide resources to specifically support at-risk cadets. Changes in academic support currently underway in the Summer Transition Program (STP- an optional four-week summer session for incoming cadets, where they take one academic class, designed to improve the academic and physical fitness readiness) are designed to identify incoming cadets at-risk in reading, math, and comprehension skills. During the period from matriculation day to the start of the fall semester, additional time is being allocated for academic orientation, to include topics such as study skills, keeping a calendar, and note taking. The new initiatives during orientation are for all incoming first-year cadets. The additional academic support personnel make it feasible to provide more academic support in the Miller Academic Center, the Writing Center, and the Math Education Resource Center. Once the academic year commences, cadets identified as at-risk will continue to receive appropriate support services during the academic year. Cadets not at-risk will have access to the full range of academic support services but unlike an at-risk cadet, will engage with academic support on a voluntary or as-needed basis.

In summary, VMI's objective is to improve retention and graduation rates to be among the best in the Commonwealth – top 5 among Virginia public institutions. By monitoring academically vulnerable cadets more closely, and intervening with academic support sooner, VMI can achieve this goal.

C2. What specific strategies/actions are you planning to take to achieve those goals? How will you draw on successes/challenges from your prior completion outcome improvement strategies?

- Continue implementing a strategic enrollment management model and other strategies initiated via VMI's SCHEV-approved grant application for the recruitment and retention of Pell-eligible cadets.
- Implement a new technology and analytics system to help predict cadet success and facilitate earlier and more frequent interventions.
- Increase faculty development, especially in core curriculum general education courses, with a focus on human learning and academic motivation.
- Expand internship and experiential learning opportunities by developing more partnerships with business and public and private entities.
- Address access and success, climate and intergroup relations, education and scholarship, organizational culture and accountability, and community engagement within the context of VMI's Esprit de Corps strategy in its draft Strategic Plan.
- Recruit and retain the best faculty from diverse backgrounds who are excellent teachers, productive scholars, active in their professions, and engaged in the lives of cadets – it is imperative that the Institute offer competitive salaries and continue to strive towards the goal of raising VMI's average faculty salary into the top five among Virginia public colleges and universities; contributes to high Esprit de Corps among the faculty.

C3. How will you use existing/recently provided resources to execute those strategies? Will you be requesting incremental state resources? Please state the request and rationale and explicitly tie to Part I of your planning template.

- VMI provides a wide range of robust, academic support services to cadets through the following support centers:
 - Miller Academic Center (MAC). Focusing on the academic success of the entire Corps across all majors, the MAC offers academic success workshops, faculty and peer-led group study sessions, disability services, and assistance to cadets in choosing/switching to the major best fitting their academic strengths and interests.
 - Mathematics Education and Resource Center (MERC). The MERC supports cadets in their math studies largely through professional and peer tutors in the Open Math Lab. In addition, the MERC offers course-specific tutoring and one-on-one appointments.
 - Writing Center. The Writing Center offers a variety of writing assistance to cadets including professional and peer writing consultation, one-on-one writing process conferences, and assistance on writing papers ranging from initial planning to polishing the final draft.

- In FY2023, the state provided VMI funding to add three full-time, academic support positions. These positions will enable VMI to provide additional academic tutoring to cadets thereby improving academic success in support of the outcomes listed above in C1.

POST-COMPLETION OUTCOMES

Key question: How is your institution preparing all students for success beyond completion (e.g., career preparation)?

C4. Please explain how you monitor post-completion outcomes (e.g., employment rates, wage attainment, debt load, upward mobility). What data do you collect? What metrics are you monitoring most closely? What do the data reveal about your institution's greatest strengths and areas for improvement with respect to post-completion outcomes? Please include any relevant data/reports in the appendix or as a separate attachment, including any data that captures outcomes by school/department/program.

VMI's Office of Career Services (OCS) collects data from multiple sources, including First Destination Surveys, alumni records, and an online database (Handshake). The collected data includes first destination after VMI, employment rates, wage, and location within six months of graduation. Following are VMI highlights from the First Destination Report for 2021-2022 graduates (98% response rate):

- 59.9% commissioned in military service,
- 97.1% employed or enrolled in graduate school,
- 0.8% seeking employment.

The extracted data from July 2023 from the U.S. Department of Education College Scorecard and the median debt of graduates as reported by SCHEV shows that VMI's graduates have median earnings of \$76,984 compared to the midpoint for 4-yr schools, \$50,391. SCHEV data (EOM 06) show that the median debt of VMI graduates in 2021-2022 was \$26,722, approximate to the statewide median for 4-yr public institutions (\$26,000).

Overall, the data shows VMI graduates have a very high probability of full-time employment with above average salaries and with median debt generally at, or below, the median debt of graduates from Virginia 4-yr public institutions.

As a Senior Military College (SMC), developing citizen-soldiers with a commitment to service to the nation is one VMI's greatest strengths. Annually, over 50% of graduates commission in the military, a large percentage of them serve the nation through law enforcement occupations or at other federal or state agencies, and are highly diverse in career attainment.

C5. What specific strategies/actions, including potential changes to your program portfolio or curriculum, are you planning to take to maximize the career readiness and job attainment of all students across programs of study, including increasing early

career exposure for students (e.g., internships) during their time at your institution? How will you draw on successes/challenges from prior initiatives?

According to the Association of American Colleges and University's survey of employers (hiring managers and executives), some of the most desired skills in college graduates are:

- The ability to work effectively in teams
- Critical thinking skills
- Data analysis and interpretation
- Ethical judgement and reasoning
- Ability to apply knowledge in real world settings

VMI's unique blend of military, academics, and athletics provides cadets with substantial opportunities to develop these skills in a variety of settings, making them coveted assets to employers in a wide variety of organizations and industries. The ability to work effectively in teams is required for success at VMI- cadets must work together in the barracks, in the classroom, and on the ROTC training grounds in order to accomplish their goals. Their time schedule is intentionally tight. They must negotiate their heavy commitments without compromising their honor and integrity. Confronted with the constant enticement to take an easier path, they must make the ethical choice or face severe consequences – just as one faces in the “real world.” Lastly, in the classroom, rote memorization will not suffice to achieve success. Cadets must apply what they have learned, be it in math, science, English, or history, and demonstrate their ability think critically and creatively as part of VMI's Core Curriculum requirements. In sum, the VMI experience is thoughtfully and intentionally designed to serve the needs of many organizations – be it the U.S. Armed Forces or in the public or private sector.

VMI will continue its strategy of producing graduates who serve the nation through commissioned, military service in addition increased service by working for government agencies or non-profit organizations. To achieve this, the Institute will maintain (or increase) the number of recruitment events for the United States Armed Forces, government agencies, and non-profit organizations. The Institute also intends to award additional (merit) financial aid through the Call to Duty Scholarship program in order to attract additional ROTC Scholarship recipients.

While almost all cadets who receive a commission will participate in at least one period of summer, experiential learning with the military branch in which they will serve, VMI plans to increase the number of cadets who participate in experiential learning, internship, for or not for credit. Currently, three academic departments (i.e., Economics and Business, Biology, Computer and Information Sciences) are offering internships for credit.

VMI will continue to expand its cybersecurity education offerings, supporting the needs of the Department of Defense (DoD) and other government agencies, as well as industries within the Commonwealth, through funding support from DoD and the Commonwealth Cyber Initiative.

VMI's Leadership Development Program, which combines classroom training through the Core Curriculum leadership course LEAD 344 (Leadership in Organizations) with practical leadership experience within the Corps of Cadets, is uniquely positioned among Virginia's state supported

colleges and universities to prepare cadets for future leadership and management roles in the military, government service, non-profit organizations, and private industry.

Beginning in summer 2024, VMI will offer a privately funded, Summer Undergraduate Entrepreneurship Program. This five-week program will provide coursework and experiential learning to help the participants develop an entrepreneurial mindset that will support their future plans – whether those plans involve starting a new business, employment within an existing organization, as military leaders or self-employment. Skills associated with an entrepreneurial-mindedness typically include adaptability, perseverance, creativity, managing ambiguity, and being action-oriented – all skills that could lead to personal success in any setting.

VMI will maintain the principles of the Core Curriculum supporting a baseline STEM education, and continue enrollment practices and academic support programs in order to support 50% enrollment in STEM majors. In doing so, the Institute will produce graduates prepared to enter an employment market that increasingly relies on technology and requires a strong baseline of knowledge in STEM.

C6. How do you intend to use existing/provided resources to execute those strategies? Will you be requesting incremental state resources? Please explicitly tie to Part I of your planning template.

VMI will continue to increase partnerships with alumni and both private and public sector employers to increase internship opportunities. Following COVID-19, there has been an increase in remote internships, which appear to work well with cadets during the fall and spring semesters. In recent years, VMI has encouraged employers to list paid opportunities to ensure that all cadets, including those from low-income backgrounds, can participate. To support increased internship opportunities, VMI is requesting funding support for a full-time, employer relations/internship coordinator position in the Office of Career Services.

WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT

Key question: How are your institution's programs of study and degree conferrals aligned with the evolving talent needs of the Commonwealth?

C7. For which specific workforce needs is your institution best positioned to supply talent, based on regional, industry, or occupation alignment?

VMI produces leaders with a strong commitment to service. As a Senior Military College, approximately 50% of graduates enter military service and many graduates who do not enter the military serve the nation/Commonwealth in other federal or state agencies. By concentrating on 14 versatile majors, VMI graduates receive a strong, liberal arts education that prepares them for a wide variety of occupations or for continued, specialized education at the graduate level. In addition, the following areas of the academic program contribute more specialized talent to the workforce:

- The Computer Science program within the Computer and Information Sciences Department, supported through the Department of Defense and the Commonwealth Cyber Initiative, and the Electrical and Computer Engineering program support “Computer Occupations.”
- The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business accredited Economics and Business program supports “Business Operations and Financial Specialists.”
- The three ABET (*Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, Inc.*) accredited engineering programs produce graduates who support a variety of engineering and construction related industries.
- The Psychology program supports “Counselors, Social Workers, and Other Community and Social Service Specialists.”
- Programs in the life sciences and natural sciences, as well as graduate school partnerships with several medical schools, support a wide variety of occupations on the area of “Healthcare Diagnosing or Treating Practitioners.”

C8. What specific strategies/actions is your institution planning to take to better align your program offerings or degree conferrals to current and projected workforce needs? Please provide a list of specific programs you intend to sunset or grow in the next 6 years to increase alignment, partnerships/initiatives you intend to launch or deepen, etc. If you intend to launch any new programs, please explain why your institution is particularly well-suited to succeed in that area.

VMI intends to continue offering the same 14, versatile academic majors, and staff regularly reviews offerings for relevance. Starting in the 2023-2024 AY, the Computer and Information Sciences Department will separate the computer science major into three distinct tracks, which enable majors to concentrate studies and better align skills with different aspects of the various “Computer Occupations.” The tracks are (1) Theory and Application, (2) Cybersecurity, and (3) Information Technology. The Department intends to obtain accreditation via ABET (Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, Inc.) for the Theory and Application track.

SECTION D: STRATEGIC DEEP DIVE – FINANCIAL EFFECTIVENESS & SUSTAINABILITY

AFFORDABILITY FOR STUDENTS & FAMILIES

Key question: How is your institution accounting for and improving affordability for students and families?

D1. What specific strategies/actions do you plan to take to improve affordability moving forward across your overall student body and priority subpopulations, and what is the expected impact? Please account for a broad range of factors including the full cost of attendance, net price, time to degree, debt load, etc.

Since all VMI cadets are enrolled as full-time students each semester, VMI’s academic advising efforts are prioritized to ensure cadets are successful and targeted to graduate in four-years,

allowing them to minimize potential debt. Additionally, VMI annually evaluates its expenditures (personnel and non-personnel) to ensure it is a good steward of public, private, and tuition dollars. VMI also continues to use available financial aid funds to meet 100% of demonstrated need of Virginia cadets who apply for aid by the annual priority deadline. Finally, the VMI Alumni Agencies consistently prioritize need-based financial aid in their fundraising efforts in order to ensure that financial pressures are not determining factors in a cadet's decision to attend, or remain, at VMI.

As further discussed in D2, many factors impact decisions on tuition and fee increases with affordability being an overriding consideration. VMI's robust financial aid resources help ensure the Institute remains accessible and affordable to qualified individuals.

REVENUE

Key question: How is your institution approaching pricing and revenue management? What are the implications on long-term top-line financial health?

D2. Please explain the rationale behind your full pricing (i.e. published tuition & fees, including mandatory non-E&G fees) and financial aid award strategy (i.e. net tuition revenue projections). What data informed your assessment of T&F increase feasibility (e.g., market comparisons, student capacity to pay) and estimates of discounts/waivers/unfunded scholarships? What informed your strategy around financial aid awards, merit and need-based, particularly for various student segments by income level and academic preparation?

VMI's tuition and fees are more comprehensive than most colleges and cover the majority of expenses a cadet must incur while enrolled. In addition to covering costs of the educational program, fees cover housing for all cadets as VMI is 100% residential, a full meal plan of 21 meals per week for every cadet, provision and maintenance (including laundry/dry cleaning) of uniforms, and costs of participating in various military and athletics (including club sports) co-curricular activities.

VMI limits tuition and fee increases as much as possible. Key factors considered in setting tuition and fee amounts include unavoidable cost increases such as employee salary/benefit increases, inflation driven cost increases in normal operating expenses such as utilities, supplies, contractual services etc. In addition, the Institute considers various cost measurement metrics such as changes in Consumer Price Index (CPI) and Higher Education Price Index (HEPI) to ensure tuition and fee increases are in line with current economic conditions.

VMI's financial aid policy is to meet 100% of the demonstrated need of all in-state cadets. The Institute has a robust financial aid program which utilizes extensive private financial aid funding, Federal grants/loans, State financial aid funding, and significant Federal ROTC scholarship funding. These sources provide both need-based and merit aid to cadets to help ensure that qualified individuals have the opportunity to attend VMI regardless of their economic status.

Out-of-state cadet tuition in FY2023 represented about 141% of the total cost of education, significantly exceeding the State minimum requirement of 100%. In-state tuition represented only about 42% of the total cost of education. Tuition revenue from out-of-state cadets has helped to mitigate the shortfall in State general funds in meeting its goal of funding 67% of the cost of education for in-state cadets. Out-of-state tuition revenue is significantly helping to minimize in-state tuition increases that would otherwise be necessary to make up this shortfall in State general funds. In FY2023, out-of-state cadet tuition is four times greater (4.06) than in-state tuition (\$40,778 versus \$10,076) and out-of-state tuition revenue comprised 70% of the total E&G tuition revenue in FY2023 although out-of-state cadets comprised only 37% of the total Corps.

In response to strategies undertaken by several Senior Military Colleges, including The Citadel and Norwich University, and to remain competitive with the Service Academies, VMI is utilizing private support to provide additional (merit) financial aid through the Call to Duty Scholarship Program, providing an award to cover VMI's housing and food costs to recipients of three and four-year ROTC national scholarships.

To attract and retain out-of-state cadets, it is important that VMI provide sufficient financial aid to help meet their demonstrated need. Approximately 60-65% of out-of-state cadets qualify for need-based aid versus 40-45% of in-state cadets. VMI continues to meet 100% of demonstrated need for in-state cadets and between 60-65% for out-of-state cadets.

Although VMI used \$2,017,000 of tuition revenue from out-of-state cadets for need-based financial aid in FY2023, this amount represents less than 8.5% of total tuition revenue.

VMI will continue to rely heavily on State-provided need-based aid for in-state cadets (\$1,187,018 in FY2023), as well as significant private endowments that provide scholarships for needy in-state cadets.

D3. What do you expect to be the impact of your pricing/discounting approach on enrollment numbers/mix (if any) and net tuition revenue moving forward and why?

The impact of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Simplification and Student Aid Index on middle-class families is being analyzed in financial aid industry publications and VMI expects it will need to continue investing in need-based aid for both in-state and out-of-state cadets to ensure continued affordability. VMI is also working hard in the competitive area of attracting ROTC scholarship recipients and believes investment in additional financial aid through the Call to Duty Scholarship program will benefit enrollment and net tuition revenue in the future.

VMI's robust financial aid program helps ensure the Institute remains affordable to both in-state and out-of-state cadets. Various sources of aid, particularly ROTC scholarships, are key to ensuring that out-of-state cadets can afford to attend VMI. These efforts to ensure affordability to all cadets helps maintain the current mix of in-state and out-of-state cadets.

COST EFFECTIVENESS

Key question: How has your institution maintained bottom-line financial health and focused investment on the levers that will drive improvements in student outcomes?

D4. Reflect on the categories/subcategories of cost that have recently experienced the most significant increases on an absolute or per-student basis. What have been the primary drivers of those increases? Please be specific and include supporting data.

VMI has not been immune to inflationary stresses as personnel expenses have increased significantly in order to recruit talented and qualified staff to rural Virginia, as well as to retain staff who have key skills. Several key retirements and higher than normal turnover have necessitated hiring replacements at increased salaries.

Additionally, the cost of services has increased in Lexington and the surrounding region as qualified contractors are being pulled toward large and high-dollar projects due to the amount of infrastructure and stimulus funds being invested.

VMI has also experienced an average water and sewer rate increase of 7.7% per year for the last five years as the City of Lexington has undertaken numerous projects to upgrade and replace aging infrastructure.

D5. What specific strategies/actions do you plan to take to contain/reduce key costs and improve fiscal health going forward while improving student outcomes? What are your objectives and what have been your results to date of any already-launched initiatives? What is the expected impact and timeframe of these strategies? Include any short-term costs that would need to be incurred to implement the strategies.

Within the context of VMI's overall strategic enrollment management efforts, a significantly enhanced emphasis on retention will improve fiscal health by maintaining corps strength.

Specifically, all cadets are now required to work with their academic advisors and support services if they are at risk (retention) and this will improve cadet outcomes.

Components of the SCHEV- Recruitment and Retention of Pell-Eligible Students Memorandum of Understanding will expand the admissions funnel by reaching a greater population of potential cadets.

Additionally, beginning in January 2023, VMI's budget team began individual monthly budget strategy sessions with Information Technology, Police, Academics, Athletics, Cadet Life, Auxiliary Services, Physical Plant, Human Resources and the Chief of Staff to discuss specific areas (operational and personnel vacancies) where costs may be contained or reduced. The meetings are ongoing and emphasis is placed on managing vacancy savings and on areas which would not directly impact academic instruction and cadets' daily lives.

D6. Provide information about your institution's highest-priority E&G capital projects and requests (including new construction as well as renovations) over the six-year plan period and how they align to your enrollment trajectory, student outcomes improvement plans, or other strategic priorities. Please also reflect on your current E&G facilities utilization (especially classrooms, labs and student service areas), particularly in light of any recent trends that might impact space needs (e.g., enrollment trends, shifting learning modalities). How has square footage per student changed over time and why? What efforts have you made to reassess and further optimize the use of your existing facilities, and what has been the impact of those efforts to date? What do you intend to do in the next six years to increase utilization?

Current priorities for E&G capital projects. This represents a continuing emphasis on facilities improvement to enhance the cadet experience.

- Improve Admissions and Financial Aid Offices. Provides improvements to the infrastructure and structure of two historic residential office buildings. These facilities are directly related to VMI's enrollment priorities.
- Replace Old and New Barracks Windows. Replaces outdated single-pane windows with a more energy efficient double-pane window system. This project is in design phase and final construction supports VMI's enrollment and leadership development priorities.
- Construct Moody Hall. Replaces the current facility with increased space to support a larger Corps of Cadets, academic collaboration and symposia, networking spaces, and public service events. The facility will also house office and support space for the VMI Alumni Agencies.
- Construct Center for Leadership and Ethics, Phase II. Expands classroom and lecture space to support the cadet leader development program. Also provides an add-on to the existing Center for Leadership and Ethics to provide space for the VMI museum and academic space for cadet collaborative interaction.
- Improve New Market Battlefield and State Historic Park. Improvements and renovations to the museum and visitor center as well as infrastructure improvements throughout the 300-acre site. These facilities support public service priorities for the general public and K-12 standards of learning.

The Corps of Cadets grew from 1,300 to 1,700 with the completion of the expanded barracks in 2008 resulting in additional class sections. While this increased overall utilization significant schedule conflicts occurred with classrooms, laboratory spaces, and providing adequate office space for faculty. Modifications to expand existing E&G facilities has been a priority to relieve constraints on teaching and laboratory space. The recently completed Scott Shipp Hall Renovation and Expansion, the scheduled Nichols Engineering Building Laboratory Renovation and Expansion and Construction of the Center for Leadership and Ethics Phase II are examples of projects addressing the utilization pressures. While pedagogy changes over time, academic instruction remains an in-person experience for VMI with multiple modalities of learning present in each class section and laboratory.

The square footage per cadet has increased over the last decade by approximately 100 square feet (772 square feet in 2012 and 866 in 2017). With completed facility expansions and a

return to normal enrollment levels in the next six years, VMI's overall square feet per cadet is expected to stabilize and be approximately 900 square feet.

Recent efforts to reassess and optimize facility utilization has been conversion of storage spaces (tied heavily to STEM facilities) into teaching or office spaces. Additionally, low utilization spaces (general computer labs) have been repurposed to support research labs. There have not been negative impacts from these reallocations of space, however, in some instances the spaces were not always 'optimal'.

Increases in utilization will result with increased enrollment to maximize the capacity of the barracks in balance with maximum capacities of academic and support facilities. Current analysis optimizes square foot utilization with enrollment at census date of 1,733.

The daily operating schedule for VMI cadets is governed by General Order #1 building in consistency of experience and uniformity to VMI's military structure and organization. Academic facilities are heavily utilized in the evening hours for cadet study. Outside of the regular academic year, VMI continues to offer eight weeks of summer school instruction and the Summer Transition Program, an optional four-week summer session for incoming cadets, where they take one academic class, designed to improve the academic and physical fitness readiness of incoming cadets. Other summer programs, such as athletic camps (resident and day camps), conferences and symposia, the Summer Undergraduate Research Institute, and the College Orientation Workshop for at-risk youth, remain active.

SECTION E: BUDGET REQUESTS

E1. Provide additional information for any budget requests in Part I of your planning template that are not described elsewhere in your narrative.

All requests have been discussed in previous sections.

SECTION F: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL REPORT

F1. Provide a link to any report your institution has produced about its economic development contributions. You may also share it in the appendix or as an attachment.

The Institute contributes to both local and regional economic development through outreach and education opportunities for local K-12 students, and development of skilled graduates with in-demand knowledge and leadership abilities.

Highlights include:

- Cyber Fusion and Cyber Cup competitions – hosted at VMI for students at Virginia institutions as well as the six Senior Military Colleges.
- Cyber Smart workshops and summer camps for both high school and middle school students to learn from cyber experts and develop skills to detect, identify, and mitigate cyber-attacks.

- Semester-long internships with the Cyber Defense Laboratory – local high school students work with undergraduate cadets and Virginia Tech graduate students to complete projects in support of cyber defense.
- STARTALK Arabic Language Courses – a summer immersive Arabic language program for Virginia high school and college students sponsored by the National Security Agency.
- Environment Virginia Symposium - Almost 600 environmental professionals exchange ideas, best practices, and knowledge, as well as participate in career and recruitment opportunities for new and emerging “green” jobs throughout the Commonwealth.
- Middle School Math Day – faculty and cadets from the Applied Mathematics Department host up to 600 regional middle school students and conduct a math modelling competition to use creativity and problem-solving skills to answer complicated math challenges.
- Membership in the 4-VA Working Group – facilitating collaborative research, course development and redesign, and other cross-institutions initiatives to promote the advancement of the Commonwealth.
- VMI Museum System – comprised of The VMI Museum, Jackson House Museum, and Virginia Museum of the Civil War located at New Market Battlefield State Historical Park, welcomes 80,000 visitors per year to learn about the rich history of VMI and Virginia. The Virginia Museum of the Civil War, for example, provides educational programs fulfilling Virginia Standards of Learning for school children.

SECTION G: FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND INQUIRY, FREE SPEECH, ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND DIVERSITY OF THOUGHT

G1. Provide a copy of any policy or reports your institution has produced and provide information about annual training or orientation related to this topic.

General Order 96 – The Superintendent’s Statement of Free Speech

<https://www.vmi.edu/media/content-assets/documents/general-orders/GO96.pdf>

General Order 72 – Facilities Utilization, Events, and Speech

<https://www.vmi.edu/media/content-assets/documents/general-orders/GO72.pdf>

General Order 79 – Distinguished Visitor and Speaker Policy

<https://www.vmi.edu/media/content-assets/documents/general-orders/GO79.pdf>

2022 Report on Constitutionally Protected Speech

<https://rga.lis.virginia.gov/Published/2022/RD419> - this report contains a transmittal memo certifying compliance with Subsection C of 23.1-401.1, General Order 72 on Facilities Utilization, Events, and Speech, and the Commandant’s Blue Book Chapter on Speech that describes the training cadets receive.

SECTION H: NEW SCHOOLS, SITES, AND MERGERS

H1. Provide information on any new instructional sites, schools, or mergers supported by all types of funding that your institution is considering or planning to undertake during the six-year period.

N/A – no new instructional sites, schools, or mergers planned during the six-year period.

[OPTIONAL] SECTION I: RESEARCH

I1. [OPTIONAL] Highlight any strategic research priorities, programs, or key areas of investment (e.g., hiring plans, critical research agendas, interdisciplinary centers, business partnerships, commercialization efforts) and IP dissemination and commercialization priorities you intend to pursue over the next 6 years that have not already been mentioned in this narrative. What are the anticipated benefits to your faculty attraction/retention strategy, student value proposition, and the economic competitiveness of the Commonwealth?

The strategic research priority at VMI is to provide faculty with meaningful research opportunities while offering cadets unique undergraduate research experiences. VMI's focus is not to be or become a research institution, but rather to maintain a strong faculty/cadet relationship while educating tomorrow's leaders in the fields most in demand.

In addition to expanding the facilities available to cybersecurity and Computer and Information Systems cadets, the Cyber Defense Laboratory (operated through a Department of Defense grant) offers seed funding to faculty across VMI interested in exploring the various intersections of the cyber world. These grants are currently being given to faculty and cadets in the Physics, Applied Mathematics, English & Rhetoric, and Electrical & Computer Engineering departments and engage almost 50 cadets in this high demand field. Through the continuation of this grant and a variety of opportunities through the Commonwealth Cyber Initiative, VMI cadets are prepared for a variety of high-value careers in the cyber realm.

Additional valuable undergraduate research opportunities are funded through the Summer Undergraduate Research Institute which supports cadet-led research projects with one-on-one faculty mentorship. These experiences help to develop the next generation of researchers across STEM and non-STEM disciplines at VMI.

VMI recently began collaborating with the Army Research Lab to offer additional research opportunities with direct benefit to the Department of Defense. This includes faculty engagement with summer programs at the Lab and cadet internships, as well as opportunities for faculty and cadets to partner with the Army Research Lab in research projects throughout the year. Cadets can engage with Department of Defense researchers during their time at VMI and advance their military career options when they commission.

Starting in FY2024, VMI will fill a new, privately funded, part-time Director of Innovation Programming position, which will be responsible for managing and developing academic, industry, and government partnerships, and for coordinating approaches across the Institute for partner engagement. This position will be responsible for building out collaborative teams of faculty, staff, and cadets to maximize the benefits of innovative partnerships and place the

Institute on a path to being an exemplary partner for innovative collaborations in research/business ventures.

VMI believes that the strength of VMI's research opportunities and the opportunities to work closely with a variety of undergraduates is a strong incentive to recruit and retain faculty with strong interest in both teaching and research. The breadth of research opportunities available across disciplines is also a strong opportunity to recruit and inspire cadets to continue their journeys in research-focused fields.

[OPTIONAL] SECTION J: COLLABORATION

Academic Collaboration

VMI has agreements in place with 17 graduate programs, 14 of which are with schools within the Commonwealth. These agreements facilitate cadets pursuing advanced professional and graduate degrees and certificates and support cadet undergraduate research. These programs include medical, engineering, law, business, and arts programs. VMI intends to continue these agreements and explore others which may present enhanced career opportunities for VMI graduates.

A recently executed agreement is with Virginia Tech to launch a new accelerated master's degree program for a Master of Science (MS) and Master of Engineering in computer science and applications/computer engineering. This partnership allows VMI cadets to apply up to 12 credits (4 courses) of VMI Computer Science upper-level elective courses as dual undergraduate/graduate credits. These credit hours will count towards both the bachelor of science degree from VMI and the master's degree from Virginia Tech. The eligible VMI courses are reviewed for content and rigor by Virginia Tech faculty. Cadets must earn an A or B for the course credit to apply towards the master's degree. A cadet earning an A or B in all 12 credit hours will then be able to complete the master's program at Virginia Tech in one year.

Cooperative Procurement

As a member of the Virginia Association of College and University Purchasing Professionals (VASCUPP), VMI contributes to and enjoys access to over 2,000 cooperative contracts that provide volume pricing for goods and services. This volume pricing is much more favorable than VMI could procure with stand-alone contracts. In addition, the ability to use these cooperative contracts eliminates the need to administratively procure and manage many contracts allowing the VMI Procurement Services Office to function with limited staffing. If VMI did not have access to these contracts, there would be an immediate need for two or possibly three additional procurement professional positions at an estimated annual cost of \$130,000 to \$200,000.

VMI is also a member of the Virginia Higher Education Procurement Cooperative (VHEPC). Its purpose is to aggregate and leverage procurement requirements and resources resulting in a greater financial advantage from cooperative procurement. Current member institutions include George Mason University, Old Dominion University, University of Virginia, Virginia Tech,

Virginia Commonwealth University, College of William & Mary, James Madison University, Radford University, Virginia Military Institute, UVA Wise, Longwood University, University of Mary Washington, Christopher Newport University, Norfolk State University, and the Virginia Community College System. The VHEPC's focus is directed to commonly used goods and services unique to higher education and builds upon the strong foundation put in place through the Virginia Association of Schools, Colleges and University Procurement Professionals (VASCUPP). The VHEPC has demonstrated that collaborative procurement has resulted in price reductions leading to increased savings by combining annual spend and resource allocation, ultimately producing economies that reduce the resources (time, people, effort) required by a single institution. VMI has followed the recommendation of the Joint Legislative Action Review Committee (JLARC) by instituting mandatory use contracts that maximize value-added standardization.

[OPTIONAL] SECTION K: STATE POLICY

K1. [OPTIONAL] Use this section to outline any state policy changes you have not already mentioned in this narrative that would enhance your ability to achieve greater success on the topics, strategies, and initiatives referenced in this narrative. What existing policies, if any, are hindering your ability to maximize outcomes and value for students? What new policies might create conditions that are more conducive to achieving those goals? What strategies or initiatives would these policy changes enable your institution to do or try that you are not yet able to do today? Please be as specific as possible.

The Virginia Military Survivors Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP) provides a waiver of tuition and mandatory fees for eight semesters at a Virginia public college or university. This benefit is available to spouses and children of military members killed in service, taken prisoner, missing in action or 90 to 100% permanently disabled resulting from their military service. As a military college, VMI strongly supports this program and is in favor of its continuance but believes that the Code should be amended to require the tuition and fee waivers be funded by state appropriation rather than the costs of the waivers absorbed by the institutions.

Program participation continues to grow. In FY 2018, VMI waived \$103,453 of tuition and fees for seven cadets enrolled in the program. By FY 2021, 40 cadets were enrolled and \$725,965 was waived. Most recently, in FY 2023, 58 cadets were enrolled in the program, resulting in \$1,095,223 in waived tuition and fee revenue. Although enrollment numbers were below average this academic year, this cadet population has continued to increase. As a result, absorbing the costs of the waiver program has become increasingly difficult and is counterproductive to efforts on affordability for other cadets.

[OPTIONAL] SECTION L: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

L1. [OPTIONAL] Use this final section to provide any additional context and/or supporting materials you feel should be incorporated into the six-year planning process.