Dear Parents,

Last year we celebrated the 175th anniversary of the founding of the Institute. The Institute’s long history is integral to the DNA of who we are as a distinctive institution of higher education in America. While we can take pride in the challenges the Institute has successfully faced in the past, it is now up to us to ensure the 2015-16 academic year becomes another shining period in its history. As you review this Superintendent’s Newsletter for Academic Year 2015-16, you will see that cadet leaders, the faculty and staff, and the administration have worked hard to set the stage for your cadet to have a successful year. The planning and preparation is complete. Now comes execution, and much of this execution is up to the Corps, the 1st Class, and your cadet.

The most important task for your cadet is that he or she embrace the VMI ethos that entwines civility, respect, and honor ... while working hard to get the most from this unique educational opportunity. This is not a matter of paying lip service to this ethos; rather, it is that our cadets live it every day. Later in this newsletter you will read about bullying and the dangers of “anonymous” social media platforms, the expectations concerning cadet conduct, the Honor Code, and the many actions we are taking to promote personal safety on post to minimize the potential for harassment, violence, and suicide. The cure for these and many other shortcomings in society is for each of us to conduct ourselves in a civil manner, to respect ourselves and others, and to live our lives honorably. If we teach and accomplish that, in many ways we set a firm foundation for the best of leadership. This continues to be my encouragement to the Corps of Cadets.

VMI offers an excellent return on investment, as noted earlier this year in a study by the Brookings Institution that compared the actual earnings of alumni 10 years after graduation with the national expected earnings based on demographic information and college major. Brookings ranked VMI as among the top 20 colleges in the nation out of more than 4,000 public and private institutions of higher education in terms of value-added earnings, occupational earnings power, and loan repayment by graduates. The findings of this study validate the long streak of top rankings VMI has earned in the last decade from such publications as U.S. News and World Report, Forbes magazine, Money magazine and others while also confirming the co-curricular approach and Vision 2039.

The tuition paid to VMI is an investment in lifetime earning power. We work hard to minimize increases, but I’m sure you notice it each time we are forced to increase costs. We are dealing with the stark fact that state support to VMI has declined 45 percent since 2002 in an “apples to apples” comparison as adjusted for inflation. I am not happy with these increases that we have had to implement in light of this history of new mandates and drastic public disinvestment in higher education; however, the alternative would be a strategic decision to cut excellence and our quality support programs. We offset this with financial aid, merit aid, ROTC scholarships, and other directed donor support ... and are dedicated to controlling costs.

A major source of new funding for the Institute for today and tomorrow will come from our current fundraising campaign. Gifts from alumni and friends will make the academic program stronger and bolster the co-curricular programs that prepare each cadet for a life of service and leadership. The campaign will be reaching out to parents in the coming months, and I encourage you to give due consideration to these overtures. The support you provide will not

Gen. J.H. Binford Peay III ’62, Superintendent

AN OPEN LETTER TO PARENTS

The most important task for your cadet is that he or she embrace the VMI ethos that entwines civility, respect, and honor ... while working hard to get the most from this unique educational opportunity.
What makes VMI such a national treasure is our commitment to preparing young men and women to take up leadership roles and to be ready as citizen-soldiers to defend our country in times of national peril.

Much of what is said in this newsletter may be said about many other colleges. What can’t be said about those other colleges, and what makes VMI such a national treasure, is our commitment to preparing young men and women to take up leadership roles and to be ready as citizen-soldiers to defend our country in times of national peril. I strongly encourage our cadets to commission and serve, for a short period, in the active or reserve forces, or with the National Guard. This short military service, with its service schooling, travel, assignments, enormous early-on responsibilities, and breadth of activities, builds on the VMI experience, translating to success in graduate school or a profession. VMI is blessed with robust active duty ROTC units tightly integrated with the Institute’s academic and co-curricular programs, an arrangement virtually unique in the nation. As a result, the very best ROTC training is available here, along with the potential for ROTC scholarships and commissioning.

This August will see another large and outstanding matriculating rat class. It is an exciting time to be around the very best of America’s young people. I continue to seek your support in reinforcing those tenets that best represent a VMI cadet and the Institute experience. The VMI leadership, faculty, and staff very much look forward to the return of the Old Corps ... and as always, thank you for entrusting your cadet to us.

Sincerely,

J.H. Binford Peay III ’62
General, U.S. Army (Retired)
Superintendent

The VMI alumni agencies seek to ensure that the Institute has the resources to provide the very best education possible to the young men and women in the Corps of Cadets. By raising, managing, and stewarding donations, the agencies support every facet of the cadet experience.

In the 2015-16 academic year, private money will account for more than 23 percent of the Institute’s $82.3 million operating budget. And because of diminishing public support, the need for private money is expected to grow.

To meet this need, the Institute launched the public phase of its latest comprehensive fundraising effort, An Uncommon Purpose: A Glorious Past, A Brilliant Future: The Campaign for VMI, on Nov. 11, 2014, the Institute’s 175th anniversary. The campaign will raise $225 million, funds that will improve the Institute’s academic program, expand scholarship aid, and continue its proud military and athletic traditions.

VMI’s alumni and friends have responded magnificently. During the campaign’s private phase, they provided more than $183 million in gifts and commitments. As of May 31, they had given an additional $35.7 million, bringing the grand total to $218.7 million.

Of the 12,848 donors, hundreds are parents of current cadets. They gave because they know that private funds are vital to VMI. They gave because they appreciate the profoundly transformative nature and the enduring value of the VMI education.

I thank those parents who have contributed and invite those who have not yet participated to visit the campaign website at www.vmi.edu/campaign and learn about this important effort.
Encourage your sons and daughters to take full advantage of VMI as a unique opportunity for a sustained, uninterrupted education across the disciplines.

ACADEMICS

VMI’s academic program provides cadets with the strongest liberal arts experience of its kind in the nation. Its strength remains with its exceptional faculty and their personal, persistent, and formative engagement with your sons and daughters in all aspects of their lives. Our majors are deliberately few in number (14), and we remain wholly undergraduate by design.

We are in the midst of a two-year process leading to reaffirmation by our accrediting agency, the Council of Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. This is tremendously important in that it is an in-depth evaluation of the quality of our academic program by an unbiased third party. Our leadership team and a group of faculty and staff members are working diligently to ensure we have a successful outcome.

An important part of our academic program is the core curriculum, which we continue to retool. As its name implies, this element is at the center of the curriculum for all cadets; it provides the common academic foundation that makes VMI graduates ready to take their place in helping solve some of the world’s most complex problems.

Among the changes cadets will find when they return in the fall is a new department head in our newest department, computer and information sciences. Selected to lead the department is Col. Mohamed Eltoweissy, a nationally renowned expert in cybersecurity. Also, the physical education department’s popular exercise science minor will operate this year from its new world-class facility in the renovated Cormack Hall.

I leave you with one final thought: VMI is first and foremost a college. Encourage your sons and daughters to take full advantage of this unique opportunity for a sustained, uninterrupted education across the disciplines. I believe that the success of our cadets is derived from their profound respect for the contributions of all disciplines, even as they cultivate their passion for particular subjects and professions.

ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT

Undergraduate Research

Parents should encourage their cadets to explore opportunities in undergraduate research, as this is can be a means of discovering a career path or accelerating the transition from college to career.

The VMI Center for Undergraduate Research holds workshops and informational sessions throughout the academic year with the goal of making cadets aware of the many opportunities to partner with faculty and undertake research across the academic disciplines. The Center can also provide funding for lab supplies or travel.

Cadets are eligible to participate in undergraduate research from the time they matriculate at VMI. Fourth and 3rd class cadets are especially encouraged to pursue research projects, as these can be a springboard to additional opportunities later on.

Study Abroad

Many of the most successful cadets at VMI incorporate one or more study-abroad experiences into their cadetships. Cadets can study abroad for a semester or a summer, as early as the summer after the 4th Class year. For a semester abroad, cadets must have a minimum grade-point average of 2.5. There is no minimum grade-point average for summer study abroad.

Study-abroad programs are open to all cadets, including STEM majors, NCAA athletes, and those who hold rank in the Corps. Cadets intending to study abroad should inform their academic advisers of their plans as soon as possible to ensure that academic requirements for graduation are met.

The cost of study-abroad programs can vary greatly. However, parents should not assume that finances will prevent their son or daughter from studying abroad. All financial aid, institutional aid, and scholarships follow cadets when they go overseas. In addition, VMI offers a number of partial study-abroad scholarships.

Parents should also know that for the military exchange programs VMI maintains with schools in France, Lithuania, Japan, and Germany the only additional costs are travel expenses.
New Offerings

Two new interdisciplinary minors are available for the first time in the 2015-16 academic year. The Asian studies minor, which is complemented by VMI’s Mandarin Chinese language classes, has as its goal to bring cadets and faculty together to promote a more complete, interdisciplinary understanding of this vitally important region.

New this academic year are minors in Asian and Middle Eastern studies.

Cadets earning the Asian studies minor choose classes from international studies and political science, history, and modern languages and cultures. Language study is strongly encouraged.

The Middle Eastern studies minor is designed for cadets interested in any aspect of the Middle East, including history, current events, culture, and religion. It complements areas of study including international studies, history, international business, and international law.

Cadets electing to earn this minor will choose from courses in history, foreign languages (Arabic), international relations, and comparative religion. Parents should know that cadets choosing the Middle East studies minor will be encouraged to study abroad for a semester.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Miller Academic Center

The Miller Academic Center stands ready to assist cadets in their quest for academic success. Among the most popular offerings are group study sessions for introductory and upper-level courses led by upper-class cadets who have earned a B average or better.

Special emphasis is placed on smoothing the often-rocky transition from high school to college. Parents of 4th Class cadets may want to encourage their sons and daughters to attend Academic Saturdays, specifically designed for new college students. Topics at these sessions include study skills, time management, and preparing for college-level exams.

Other programs offered by the Center include Project Success, for cadets on academic probation, and Operation Excel, for 4th Class cadets on ROTC scholarships.

Mathematics Education Resource Center

The Mathematics Education Resource Center offers free tutoring to cadets enrolled in mathematics classes including pre-calculus, calculus, probability/statistics, matrix algebra, and differential equations. Cadets may stop by the Center’s Open Math Lab whenever the Center is open.

Writing Center

The Writing Center provides assistance with all stages of the writing process, from choosing a topic to polishing a final draft, and with projects including cover letters, resumes, lab reports, honors theses, presentations, speeches, and creative writing assignments.

New for the 2015-16 academic year is a team of consultants specializing in digital and multimodal projects, including websites, podcasts and videos, to assist cadets composing digital projects for classes.

Appointments are strongly encouraged, and parents should encourage cadets to sign up early.
Below are instructions and encouragement to the individual classes that I give at the beginning of the year. In addition, I encourage cadets to explore a document they will find in their rooms, the Leadership Opportunities Inventory. It identifies leadership opportunities available to cadets in each of their years at the Institute, and is an invaluable resource for cadets seeking leadership positions.

CHARGE TO THE RAT MASS

*Embrace the Challenge*

Every journey, no matter how great or small, begins with a single step. At VMI, that single step begins on Matriculation Day, as incoming rats sign the New Cadet Roster. The step is a commitment to oneself and to one’s Brother Rats to accept correction, to face up to challenges, to see the job done – whether it’s a long march or long hours of study – and to help those around you do the same. The Rat Line is hard; to get through, new cadets must invest themselves in their own success and that of their Brother Rats.

The rat year is a time of bonding with one’s classmates, building class spirit, and embracing the process. It is also a time of leaving behind the old to make way for the new and of learning to live at the higher ethical standard that VMI’s honor system demands. Rats must be ready to embrace the challenges.

In the long, hard days ahead, new cadets must focus on balancing the demands of the Rat Line with the challenges of academics and keep their focus on the finish.

CHARGE TO THE THIRD CLASS

*Stay the Course*

The 3rd Class year can become wasted time or time wisely spent, depending on the choices each cadet makes. With the structure of the Rat Line behind them, and the responsibilities and rewards of the 2nd and 1st class years far in the future, 3rd Class cadets should take charge of their leadership and academic development, laying the groundwork for opportunities that will open up in their final years at the Institute.

Third Class cadets should focus on academics. There is time this year to make up lost ground if need be or to look for opportunities in research and through academic and professional clubs and societies.

The 3rd Class year is also an ideal time to take on a leadership position as a corporal in preparation for future leadership opportunities. Third Class cadets should also consider enriching their VMI experience through sports or other club activities and should be sure to maintain their physical fitness.

Throughout the year, 3rd Class cadets must live in the awareness that they are the immediate standard-bearers for the Rat Mass. Rats will model their behavior on what they see upper class cadets doing, so maintaining the highest standard of conduct at all times is a vital responsibility.

CHARGE TO THE SECOND CLASS

*Prepare to Lead*

The 2nd Class year is one of transition, and 2nd Class cadets should explore opportunities to pursue academic interests and develop their leadership skills. While setting an example for 3rd and 4th class cadets, 2nd Class cadets should learn from the 1st Class, preparing themselves to take on leadership roles in the Corps next year.

As primary trainers of the incoming rats, this year’s 2nd Class cadets have both the opportunity and the obligation to engage in mentoring relationships with members of the Rat Mass. Developing relationships with 3rd Class cadets will pay off next year when you lead the Corps and this year in celebrating Ring Figure.

The Ring Figure celebration should be treated with civility and respect. In so doing, 2nd Class cadets honor the past and ensure a memorable day. Cadets who abuse alcohol or other substances will not only dishonor one of the Institute’s most cherished traditions, but also ruin for themselves and their Brother Rats what should be a milestone celebration.

CHARGE TO THE FIRST CLASS

*Leadership and Legacy*

With higher rank and greater privilege comes a commensurate increase in responsibility. As this year’s 1st Class cadets mentor their rats through the dyke system, they should be continuously aware of their invaluable role in setting an example and helping rats build honor, integrity, respect, and civility. As each 1st Class cadet takes on responsibility for a rat, he or she becomes a teacher and a leader.

Leadership opportunities are at their height during the 1st Class year. These cadets should step forward, not only within the Corps but also in team and club sports and in the classroom, to exercise leadership and prepare themselves for leadership in their careers.

Leaving a legacy should be of paramount concern to members of the 1st Class. They should go about their daily lives with the awareness that they are VMI men and women, first and foremost. As such, they have an obligation to set the example for underclass cadets, aware, too, they will soon represent VMI in the wider world as alumni.

I want all 1st Class cadets to go through the 2015-16 academic year with the knowledge that they have both the right and the privilege to continue the legacy of honorable leadership passed down by generations of cadets since 1839.
Cadets are strongly encouraged to seek a commission. Though there have been slight reductions in commissioning slots in some of the active services, there are more than ample slots in the Guard and Reserve, and there are often opportunities to compete for active duty assignments upon graduation. We also have a pathway for commissioning in the Coast Guard.

ARMY ROTC

The Army ROTC unit at VMI is the largest branch of service on post and offers the best opportunity of receiving a commission.

A large number of Army scholarships are available. Be aware, however, that scholarships can be lost as well as gained. To keep a scholarship, a cadet must maintain a 2.0 grade-point average (3.0 in Army ROTC classes) and pass the Army’s physical fitness test. Most scholarships are awarded by the 3rd Class year.

It is also necessary to be medically qualified for scholarships, but parents should not assume that any particular medical condition will disqualify their cadet. Medical waivers are available for many conditions.

Cadets intending to commission must take part in summer training. Scholarship cadets must attend Cadet Initial Entry Training the summer between their 3rd and 2nd class years. All contracted cadets must attend Cadet Leadership Camp between the 2nd and 1st class years.

Selection for any particular branch of the Army is competitive and is based upon factors including grade-point average, leadership skills, and standardized test results, so consistent performance in all areas is important.

NAVY/MARINE CORPS ROTC

Parents of cadets interested in commissioning into the Navy or Marine Corps should realize that high performance is essential to selection for a scholarship. Nearly all of the scholarships in this unit are awarded to cadets in their 4th or 3rd class year, so a demonstrated commitment to excellence early in the cadetship can make a difference.

Scholarship cadets will be expected to attend summer training sessions. Rising 3rd Class cadets on scholarship for the Navy or the Marine Corps must attend CORTRAMID, Career Orientation and Training for Midshipmen.

Rising 2nd Class cadets intending to commission in the Navy shadow an enlisted sailor over the summer. During that same time period, those intending to commission in the Marine Corps attend either mountain warfare training or a cruise on an amphibious ship.

All rising 1st Class cadets on Navy scholarship are required by federal law to attend a first class cruise, during which they shadow a commissioned officer. Marine Corps-option cadets attend Officer Candidates School, also federally mandated, during this time period.

VMI’s ROTC instructors are looking for cadets who are academically and physically fit and demonstrate engagement, enthusiasm, and commitment.

AIR FORCE ROTC

Parents of cadets seeking a commission in the U.S. Air Force should be aware that academic standards are quite high. A minimum grade-point average of 2.5 is required to commission, but those selected to contract usually have a grade-point average of 3.0 or higher.

That selection, known as “enrollment allocation,” takes place during the 3rd Class year. It is therefore imperative that Air Force ROTC cadets enter VMI with the goal of establishing and maintaining a high grade-point average during the 4th Class year. A cadet’s grade-point average also significantly influences his or her chances of getting an Air Force scholarship.

A STEM major is not required for all positions in the Air Force, but it is required for some, such as engineer.

Parents of cadets interested in becoming pilots need to know that pilot selection does not require a STEM major. A cadet’s chances of getting selected as a pilot increase markedly if he or she has had flight time, though, so paying for private flying lessons can be a wise investment.

Parents should also keep in mind that selection for the Air Force takes place on a national basis. Strong academics, a high level of physical fitness, and a demonstrated level of commitment will greatly increase a cadet’s chances of commissioning.

COAST GUARD

Cadets may commission in the U.S. Coast Guard under the Coast Guard Selected School program. This program allows graduates of selected military schools, including VMI, to commission as Coast Guard officers by attending an abbreviated version of Officer Candidate School upon graduation.

Parents should be aware that standards for this program are quite high, both academically and medically, and the Coast Guard is quite selective. Applications must be made in the fall of the 1st Class year. Cadets belonging to any ROTC unit at VMI are eligible to apply.
EMPHASIS ON PREVENTION

Prevention is the number one goal of VMI’s plan for post safety. This is especially true in the areas of alcohol and drug abuse, as well as sexual misconduct of all types, including dating and domestic violence.

With these issues currently in the spotlight on college campuses around the nation, the Institute has implemented a proactive policy designed to emphasize safe choices, responsible behavior, and concern for the welfare of others. Parents are urged to talk with their cadets, emphasizing the importance of these topics.

The appointment of a new Inspector General/Title IX coordinator, Col. Jeffrey Boobar, to replace Col. Bill Grace, who is retiring after a highly successful tenure, illustrates our continuing emphasis on the personal safety of our cadets and employees. VMI has been closely engaged with the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights in matters related to sexual assault, sexual harassment, and equity.

VMI’s policies concerning alcohol abuse and sexual misconduct are outlined in General Orders 2 and 16, which can be found at www.vmi.edu/generalorders. The policies of both orders apply to cadets and employees, on and off post. Outside the judicial system, the maximum penalty for cadet violations of either policy is dismissal from the Institute. New cadets and their parents should familiarize themselves with both orders prior to matriculation.

ALCOHOL ABUSE AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT PREVENTION

General Order 2 states that cadets, regardless of age, may not consume or possess alcohol on post. This policy applies to all VMI events, including tailgating.

With the goal of prevention in mind, parents should help their cadets understand the repercussions of the abuse of alcohol and other drugs. Parents should stress that alcohol abuse is neither a harmless pastime, nor a rite of passage for those away from home for the first time. For example, alcohol is involved in 80 percent of the sexual assaults occurring on college campuses.

VMI’s efforts to prevent alcohol abuse begin before matriculation, as 4th Class cadets are required to complete an online training module, “Alcohol Wise.” That training continues once new cadets have arrived on post, with emphasis on prevention of both alcohol abuse and sexual assault. Parents should not encourage violations of the alcohol policy, and they should talk with their cadets about the dangers of binge drinking.

General Order 16 deals with discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct, and retaliation for reporting such behavior. Preserving an atmosphere of civility and mutual respect are at the heart of this order. General Order 16 gives clear reporting instructions. Reports may be made anonymously.

For more information about sexual misconduct and resources available in Lexington and Rockbridge County, visit the Project Horizon website at www.projecthorizon.org.

Information on alcohol abuse and sexual assault prevention is provided throughout all four years of the cadetship. The Cadet Peer Educators, an outreach group of the Cadet Counseling Center, work to educate their peers about the dangers of alcohol abuse throughout the academic year.

Bystander Intervention Training

VMI uses a curriculum provided by the Step Up Program to teach bystander intervention, a critical aspect of maintaining safety on post. Bystander intervention training empowers cadets to intervene in a safe and positive manner when they see others in potentially threatening situations. This training assists cadets in recognizing right from wrong and in use of the buddy system in potentially dangerous situations.

In the 2015-16 academic year, bystander intervention training will be mandatory for 4th and 3rd class cadets. These small-group sessions are facilitated by faculty and staff from across post, as well as staff from the Cadet Counseling Center, Cadet Peer Educators, and members of the Cadet Equity Association.

Information on Step Up is available at stepupprogram.org.

VEHICLE AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

With construction activity continuing around post, safety dictates that traffic laws be enforced. The postwide speed limit of 15 miles per hour will be strictly enforced.

Construction activity at Cocke Hall is affecting pedestrian traffic from main post to Foster Stadium, which will become an important factor on game weekends. Please respect barriers and signs as you make your way from the Parade Ground to the stadium.
NEW COACHES, NEW VENUES

It certainly is an exciting time to be a Keydet.
Our NCAA teams have been successful in their first year of reintegration into the Southern Conference after more than 10 years in the Big South. Now, with a year’s experience in the Southern behind us and with strong leadership from our athletic department staff and impressive new coaches for many of our sports, I look forward to a year of “steady improvement” by our cadet athletes and our teams. During this academic year you may also see greater coverage of VMI teams on ESPN3.

PEOPLE

When athletes return to the Institute in the fall, they will be greeted by six new head coaches – in football, basketball, men’s and women’s soccer, water polo, and lacrosse. The new leadership will be an integral part of ensuring another successful year in the Southern Conference.

VMI’s athletes enjoyed their fair share of success last year. Al Cobb, quarterback on the football team, was named the league’s Freshman of the Year. Hannah Dickinson, captain of both the women’s cross country and track teams, was honored for her work in the classroom, earning the Southern Conference’s Mike Wood Graduate Scholarship. Most recently, more VMI baseball players earned all-conference honors than in any year since 2010, and catcher Mike Winn was named a Louisville Slugger third-team All-American.

PLACES

Cadet-athletes in search of new achievements in the coming academic year will find new facilities to help them along.

With a weight-lifting center that now rivals any in the state, Cormack Hall is spacious enough to accommodate many athletes at once.

Cormack Hall has been upgraded to include a weight room that will serve both physical education classes and all of the NCAA sports teams except football, which has its own training facility in Clarkson-McKenna Hall. A weight-lifting center that now rivals any in the state, Cormack’s boasts 18 well-equipped individual work-out stations and is spacious enough to accommodate many athletes at once.

The improvements to Cormack Hall will alleviate conflicts that sometimes arose in Cocke Hall, where cadets pursuing personal fitness and NCAA athletes in training often competed for time in the weight room. Cocke Hall is undergoing renovations of its own, making it a more modern facility, with two levels opening for use sometime this fall, the rest next summer.

Other improvements to that facility include a brand new wrestling complex that will benefit athletes and spectators alike. For the wrestlers, who did most of their training in Cocke Hall during previous seasons, there will be more than 5,000-square feet of practice area. This space will consolidate everything they need – practice space, training room, film room and more – into one area. The wrestlers will have a new locker room, a new sound system, new lights, and a new scoreboard. Fans will be treated to permanent bleachers, making for a more comfortable experience when watching the wrestling team make its way back to the top of the Southern Conference. In short, there are probably only 10 other wrestling facilities in the country that match the one now here at VMI.

ACADEMICS

While work continues on upgrading the athletic facilities on post, parents need not worry that VMI has forgotten its primary mission. The Institute continues to focus on the academic support cadet-athletes need.

The Cadet-Athlete Development Office, which recently changed its name to reflect its broader academic support offerings, offers advising, tutoring, and academic counseling programs and is sponsoring an honors program for athletes who excel in the classroom.

The Office will introduce this fall its Rat Athlete Transition Program, focusing on organization and planning skills. All 4th-Class athletes will attend weekly individual counseling appointments. They will also attend guided study sessions twice a week. These sessions will be monitored by the Cadet-Athlete Development Office staff.

Also new this fall will be the Athletic Department At-Risk Program, mandatory for any cadet-athlete whose cumulative grade point average falls below 2.25 or any cadet-athlete who passes fewer than 12 hours the previous semester. These at-risk cadets will be required to attend guided study sessions once a week, as well as weekly counseling and learning strategies sessions.

We are proud of the direction the athletic department at VMI is taking, both on and off the fields of play.
NEW CORMACK OPEN FOR WORK AND PLAY

When parents and cadets return this fall, they’ll hear the sounds of construction echoing around post, evidence that the Institute is poised to take a significant leap forward in the facilities that it provides for the physical and military training of the Corps of Cadets.

The bulk of this construction consists of the two phases of the Corps Physical Training Facilities project, which encompasses the renovation of Cocke and Cormack halls as well as the construction of the Indoor Training Facility.

The work in Cormack Hall wrapped up in June, providing a state-of-the-art weight training facility, offices and classrooms for the physical education department, and competition and training spaces worthy of the Keydet wrestling team.

Crews are now hard at work modernizing Cocke Hall, and exterior work is evidenced by the scaffolding around the building, which is covered to safeguard against falling debris. Scaffolding will remain in place into 2016 as crews improve the building’s exterior.

Parents and cadets will find new pedestrian routes in place, as construction has necessitated the closing of sidewalks around Cocke Hall and through Memorial Gardens. The pedestrian bridge across Main Street will remain open, and information concerning foot traffic to Foster Stadium will be updated as the construction continues.

Memorial Gardens will remain closed into the summer of 2016. Underground infrastructure will be upgraded, a waterproofing membrane put in place, and two 10,000-gallon cisterns installed to collect rainwater for Memorial Gardens.
The lower two floors of Cocke Hall will reopen sometime this fall, when cadets will make use of the renovated space and new equipment in the weight room on the 200 level. Group exercise spaces, the powerlifting training room, and a cardio room will open at the same time on the 100 level.

Other areas of Cocke Hall will reopen in the summer of 2016, providing the Corps with an improved and modernized physical training facility just a few steps from barracks.

Across Main Street, the Indoor Training Facility continues to take shape as the construction effort transitions from groundwork to structural components. The footprint of the building is complete, with the structure currently standing at the floor level of the parking garage. As the construction progresses, parents can watch via a webcam at www.vmi.edu/webcams.

Structural steel and concrete will rise ever higher into the fall semester, when large roof trusses will be delivered to cap off the structure. Their installation will have a significant impact on traffic, and plans are currently being made to schedule this activity to avoid major VMI and community events.

The facility, when complete, will be among the premier indoor track facilities on the East Coast, featuring an Olympic-size hydraulic track. Other highlights of the facility include a high-ropes course and a 34-foot climbing wall. When completed in during the fall of 2016, this will be one of the most outstanding facilities of its kind on the Eastern Seaboard.

Parents and cadets returning to post will also see new facilities completed on North Post above Gray-Minor Stadium.

A new Leadership Reaction Course will put cadets’ leadership and problem-solving skills to the test as they navigate obstacles presented in each of the course’s 10 bays.

In addition, a new Physical Plant facility will provide for the storage and upkeep of grounds maintenance equipment, enhancing the ability of staff to maintain North Post.

We are commencing a series of smaller projects to address a $25 million backlog of maintenance and repairs. Some of these projects will continue into the academic year.
The Blue Book contains the rules and regulations that govern a cadet’s daily life, from matriculation to graduation. Cadet knowledge and understanding of “status” – right place, right time, right uniform, doing the right thing – is a constant and continuous point of emphasis. Cadets are bound by honor to know when they are or are not in an “All Right” status and when to place themselves on report.

**DRUG USE**

VMI maintains a zero-tolerance stance in regard to the illegal use of drugs. The use of illegal drugs and the illegal use of prescription medications by cadets will result in automatic dismissal.

General Order Number 53, Policy on Prohibiting Controlled Substances and Drug Paraphernalia, authorizes VMI to randomly test cadets, on a periodic basis, for the presence of illegal drugs and controlled substances. VMI provides preventive education programs regarding healthy decision making and safe and legal use of substances.

**ALCOHOL**

VMI maintains strict rules, stiff penalties, and constant briefings, which serve to deter most cadets from serious alcohol incidents both on and off post. General Order 2 states that cadets, regardless of age, may not consume or possess alcohol on post. This policy applies to all VMI events, including tailgating.

Disciplinary actions following a first violation of these policies, either on or off post, include several months of confinement, many hours of marching, demerits, and conduct probation. A second alcohol-related offense will normally draw a suspension from VMI, and a third offense, a dismissal. Depending on the seriousness of any offense, VMI reserves the right to suspend or dismiss a cadet. Cadets who violate these policies also receive a substance abuse assessment, education, and referral if needed.

**DATING**

VMI’s military-based regimental system operating in the close quarters of barracks dictates the need to be clear about fraternization within the Corps.

No cadet may date another cadet within his or her chain of command.

Since the focus of the 4th Class year is training, all dating within the Corps is prohibited during the 4th Class year.

**MARRIAGE AND PARENTHOOD POLICY**

As set forth in General Order 7, any cadet who marries or incurs the responsibilities of parenthood is expected to resign from the Corps. Absent voluntary resignation, should the Institute, in its reasonable judgment, conclude that a cadet is married or has incurred the responsibilities of parenthood, such cadet shall be separated from the Corps for failure of eligibility.

For the purpose of this policy, the responsibilities of parenthood are deemed to begin upon the birth of a cadet’s biological child for whom the cadet has custody, child-care responsibilities, or legal support obligations. A cadet who becomes pregnant can continue as a cadet until it is medically determined that she cannot fulfill the duties and meet the standards expected of a cadet. The cadet is then put on medical leave until fit to return to duty. Any cadet, male or female, who has incurred the responsibilities of parenthood must make legally sufficient arrangements for another individual to have temporary custody and legal guardianship of the child to qualify for readmission.

**USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

Parents and cadets must think together about wise use of social media and the Internet. If a post to sites such as Yik Yak, Secret, or Whisper is perceived as threatening, the consequences can be serious.
for the cadet who made the post. And, though cadets may believe they are posting anonymously, in certain cases the source of the post can be disclosed or discovered, leading to legal action or dismissal from the Institute.

Parents need to speak with their cadets often about social networking sites and remind them that they may be checked by employers to screen applicants for hire and by the federal government for security clearances.

Indeed, a few cadets have inappropriately used social media – posting obscene, insulting, or threatening content – in what they believed to be harmless pranks or private conversations and in doing so unknowingly jeopardized their futures. Cyberbullying is not tolerated at VMI.

The VMI computer use policy is available online at www.vmi.edu/ITApproUse.

MOTOR VEHICLE USE FOR CADETS

VMI maintains strict restrictions on cadet use of automobiles, and the Institute expects consistent and continued parental support for these policies.

Underclass cadets are not authorized to operate motor vehicles in Rockbridge County during the academic year. Note: 2nd and 3rd Class cadets who are active members of drilling Reserve or National Guard units outside of Rockbridge County may request permission to store a car in VMI-designated parking areas for the sole purpose of attending drill.

First Class cadets must register their vehicles upon returning for the start of the fall semester, and each will be provided a designated location for parking. Parking spaces will be provided on post for nearly half of the 1st Class vehicles. The remaining vehicles will park at a remote parking area in the former Kmart parking lot. The goal is to provide at least one permanent parking space on post for each 1st Class room.

Parents are reminded that parking fines and penalties for non-authorized vehicles or non-registered cadet vehicles are strictly enforced. Also strictly enforced will be the 15-mile-per-hour postwide speed limit.

CADET PRIVATELY OWNED WEAPONS

Cadets are not authorized to bring personal weapons onto VMI property. The only exception to this policy is for cadets who are current members of the Skeet Club using the Skeet Club permit. Other exceptions to this policy are very rare.

Cadet who are not Skeet Club members and wish to bring a privately owned weapon to VMI for official business must submit a permit to the superintendent through the Commandant’s Office.

MEDICAL SERVICES AND HEALTH

The infirmary is staffed by a nurse 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with clinicians available Monday through Saturday and other times by appointment while cadets are on post.

The infirmary educates cadets about health care and safe choices, with close coordination between medical and psychological services. The professional staff of the Center for Cadet Counseling, which offers free, confidential counseling for all cadets, is available to assist in the transition to the demanding VMI environment.

As parents, you may rest assured that in the event of a life-threatening or incapacitating mental health emergency you will be notified and asked to become actively engaged in the care of your cadet. Any threat of physical violence of which you or your cadet becomes aware should be reported immediately to Institute officials.

The VMI pandemic plan was rehearsed last year and will be again this year in a mass inoculation exercise for cadets. All cadets will be offered the opportunity to receive the flu vaccine as long as the supply lasts. Please discuss this opportunity with your cadet prior to the October exercise.

ACCOUNTING MATTERS

Accounting Convenience

Parents and cadets may view VMI bills and make payments online. For parent access, cadets must register their parents as authorized bill payers through their cadet Post View accounts.

Keydet Cash

Using their VMI ID cards, cadets can make purchases in the VMI PX, bookstore, and laundry, as well as all post vending machines with card readers. Since the card works like a bank debit card, cadets can enjoy the convenience of going cashless by carrying just one card.

This system is administered by Aramark. Funds can be deposited online to a cadet’s account and will be available within 24 hours through the ID card. Card information is available online, so cadets can view the current account balance and parents and others may view account information or add funds with permission of the card holder. Unused Keydet Cash carries over from year to year until graduation. Please visit vmi.campusdish.com/ or call 540-464-7374 to sign up for or learn more about the VMI ID Card Keydet Cash program.

VMI Keydet Bookstore

The VMI Keydet Bookstore coordinates with academic departments to keep costs down for cadets and their families. Rental books and e-books are offered as reduced-price options. Cadets can pre-order books online at www.bkstr.com/vmistore/shop/books/.

Accident Insurance

VMI provides cadets with accident insurance that will cover up to $5,000 for any injury. This insurance policy is secondary to medical coverage provided by families.
The Center for Leadership and Ethics offers cadets programming designed to strengthen their development as leaders. Lectures, conferences, symposia, and other programming in the 2015-16 academic year will focus on the impact of technology on society.

Among the conferences planned for this year, two will address this theme. The first, “Hands-on STEM: Technology and Integrated Project-Based Learning,” will be offered Oct. 6-7 to an audience consisting primarily of K-12 educators. Cadets are expected to be involved as presenters.

The second, the sixth annual Leadership Conference, will take place March 7-8, 2016. This conference, which should be of great interest to cadets, is titled, “Ethical Dilemmas in the Digital Age.” Topics include national security and the need to balance security and privacy.

In addition to the conferences, other programs offered by the Center include the Leadership Book Program, which this year will encourage cadets to read books about technology and ethics. Parents should talk with their cadets about the benefits of participating in this cadet-led program, which also brings noted authors to post.

A further offering will be the H.B. Johnson ’26 Distinguished Speaker Series, now under the auspices of the Center for Leadership and Ethics. This series, formerly under the Office of the Dean, will bring several speakers from a variety of military, academic, and business backgrounds to the Institute in the coming year.

These offerings will be supported by the Leader in Residence program, which brings a leader with significant military and business accomplishments to post, and the center’s ongoing efforts to send cadets to leadership conferences at other colleges and universities.

**For parking and weather information:**
[www.vmi.edu/gameday](http://www.vmi.edu/gameday)
[www.vmi.edu/athletics](http://www.vmi.edu/athletics)
[@VMIAthletics](https://twitter.com/VMIAthletics)
Sept. 5-6
New Cadet Oath Ceremony

Rats will be authorized to take the “Visit/Dine by Invitation” permit beginning at 2 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 5, and may remain off post until 10 p.m. Rats must be accompanied by a parent or guardian, grandparent, aunt or uncle, brother or sister 23 years of age or older, full-time member of the VMI faculty or staff, or parent of another cadet.

At 11 a.m. on Sunday, Sept. 6, Gen. Peay will administer the Cadet Oath to the rat class at the Bushong House on the New Market Battlefield in New Market, Va. At completion of a picnic (noon), the rats will relocate to the town of New Market for a 2 p.m. parade down Main Street. They will return by bus to VMI by 5 p.m. and may use the Visit/Dine by Invitation permit to leave post until 10 p.m. Rats may miss Supper Roll Call formation while using the permit but must be off post and in uniform.

Oct. 16-17
Parents Weekend

Parents may attend classes and the parade on Friday, Oct. 16; the Parents Weekend permit ends on Sunday, Oct 18, at 8:30 p.m. Restrictions are lifted only for cadets and rats who are in the company of an authorized adult, i.e., a parent or guardian, grandparent, aunt or uncle, brother or sister 23 years of age or older, full-time member of the VMI faculty or staff, or parent of another cadet. Cadets and rats signed out on the “Parents Weekend” permit may leave the county but are not authorized to spend the night off post and must observe the following schedule: Friday, Oct. 16 – return by midnight; Saturday, Oct. 17 – Breakfast Roll Call (BRC) at 7 a.m., parade at 10:30 a.m., football game march-down and football game at 1 p.m., and return by 1 a.m.; Sunday, Oct. 18 – cadets are released from quarters at 7 a.m. Status check is at 8:30 p.m.

Nov. 20
Ring Figure

Parents should be aware that any serious alcohol offense during the week of Ring Figure forfeits a cadet’s participation in Ring Figure activities, including the ring presentation. Parental support for this policy is needed, as inappropriate alcohol use can cause cadets to miss this milestone of their cadetship.

The Class of 2017 will begin to celebrate Ring Figure on Thursday, Nov. 19, with a class-only supper. On Friday, Nov. 20, the Ring Presentation Ceremony will take place at 1:30 p.m. in Cameron Hall; this ceremony is open to the public. The Ring Figure Ball is Friday evening and is restricted to cadets and their dates. Ring Figure events conclude on Saturday, Nov. 21, with a parade at 10:30 a.m. and football game against Western Carolina University at 1:30 p.m.

May 14-16
Commencement Week

At VMI, the completion of final exams does not mark the end of the academic year but rather the start of Commencement Week activities. During this period, many required events and practices are scheduled for cadets of all four classes.

The mandatory 4th Class Field Training Exercise begins May 11 and concludes on May 13. For the upper three classes, ceremony and parade rehearsals begin May 12 in preparation for the Institute Awards and Graduation Parade May 14, commissioning ceremony and New Market Parade May 15, and graduation May 16.

Cadets may not depart for summer furlough until completion of the graduation ceremony on May 16. Parents are reminded not to schedule appointments for cadets during Commencement Week. Cadets seeking internships and summer jobs must not accept positions requiring a start earlier than May 16.
SPECIAL DATES 2015-2016

Matriculation Day (Cameron Hall) ........................................ Aug. 22
Old Corps returns, 10 p.m................................................. Aug. 30
Classes begin ................................................................. Sept. 1
Homecoming weekend ................................................... Oct. 9-10
Parents Weekend ............................................................ Oct. 16-17
Ring Figure ....................................................................... Nov. 20
Thanksgiving furlough begins (CAD) .................................. Nov. 24
Thanksgiving furlough ends, 10 p.m................................. Nov. 29
Exams ............................................................................. Dec. 14-18
December commissioning ceremony ................................... Dec. 17
December graduation ...................................................... Dec. 18
Christmas furlough begins (CAD) ...................................... Dec. 18
Christmas furlough ends, 10 p.m...................................... Jan. 11
Classes begin ................................................................. Jan. 13
Spring furlough/Easter Break begins (CAD) ....................... March 16
Spring furlough/Easter Break ends, 10 p.m....................... March 28
Exam period ................................................................. May 6-11
Institute Awards & Graduation Parade ............................. May 14
Commissioning & New Market Ceremony ........................ May 15
Commencement ................................................................ May 16

*CAD = Completion of Academic Duties

Furlough Protocol
Due to the military protocol followed by the Institute, departure times from VMI are firm and cannot be adjusted. Cadets and families must schedule travel times, family events, and medical appointments to avoid conflicts with Corps requirements and responsibilities. Please use the following information to make plans and take particular care to build in adequate travel time to meet VMI’s departure and arrival requirements. Cadets may use Academic Days only to extend a furlough and may not depart VMI until their scheduled classes are completed.

Thanksgiving Furlough
Furlough begins on completion of academic duty Tuesday, Nov. 24. If arrangements cannot be made for Tuesday travel, then barracks will remain open Wednesday, Nov. 25, until 11 a.m. Furlough ends Sunday, Nov. 29, at 10 p.m.

Christmas Furlough
Furlough begins on completion of academic duty (exams) during exam week. All cadets and rats must be checked-out of barracks by 5 p.m. Friday, Dec. 18. Cadets return for spring semester by 10 p.m. Monday, Jan. 11.

Spring Furlough/Easter Break
Break begins on completion of academic duty on Wednesday, March 16, and runs through Monday, March 28 at 10 p.m. Barracks will be closed and locked from afternoon of March 16 through noon March 28.

Summer Furlough
Summer furlough begins at the conclusion of the graduation ceremony May 16. VMI policy prohibits departures prior to graduation except in the case of family emergencies and graduations of immediate family members. Medical appointments and surgeries must be scheduled after May 16.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Contact a Cadet (Visitor Center) ........................................ 464-7306

ACADEMIC INFORMATION
Dean of the Faculty ..................................................... 464-7212
Academic Advising .................................................... 464-7741
Registrar .................................................................... 464-7213
Summer Session Office .............................................. 464-7319

GENERAL INFORMATION
Admissions Office ....................................................... 464-7211
Athletic Ticket Office .................................................. 464-7266
Visitor Center ............................................................ 464-7306
VMI Bookstore ............................................................ 464-7334
VMI Museum ............................................................... 464-7334

CADET SUPPORT
Guard Room .............................................................. 464-7294
Financial Aid ............................................................. 464-7208
Information Technology .............................................. 464-7341
Anonymouse Reporting .............................................. 464-7702
Inspector General/Title IX Office .................................. 464-7072
Office of Career Services ............................................ 464-7560
Postal Services ........................................................... 464-7745
The Bomb (VMI yearbook) ........................................... 464-7245
The Cadet (VMI cadet newspaper) ................................. 464-7242
Writing Center ............................................................ 464-7045

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES
Chief of Staff .............................................................. 464-7104
Commandant’s Office ................................................ 464-7313
Dean of the Faculty ..................................................... 464-7212
Deputy Commandant & Officer-in-Charge ................. 464-7314
Office of the Superintendent ....................................... 464-7311
Sergeant Major, Corps of Cadets ................................. 464-7706
Student Accounting ..................................................... 464-7217
VMI Police (non-emergency) ........................................ 464-7017

ROTC PROGRAMS
U.S. Air Force ............................................................ 464-7354
U.S. Army .................................................................... 464-7351
U.S. Navy/Marine Corps ............................................. 464-7275

PARENTS COUNCIL
Rob and Cheryl Hughes (Co-Pres) ....................................

To mail a package:
Cadet (followed by name)
450 Burma Road
Virginia Military Institute
VMI Box (followed by box number)
Lexington, VA 24450-0304

To mail cards and letters:
Cadet (followed by name)
Virginia Military Institute
VMI Box (followed by box number)
Lexington, VA 24450-0304

Virginia Military Institute