



FOUNDATION

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December 28, 2022

David Prasnicki
Chief Executive Officer, Virginia Military Institute Alumni Agencies
Post Office Box 932
Lexington, Virginia 24450

CF: Mr. Meade King '85, Chief Operating Officer, VMI Foundation

David Prasnicki:

We are contacting you as a courtesy from one peer organization to another with the shared goal to support aspects of the Virginia Military Institute's mission "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." In the spirit of cooperation and unity of effort The Cadet Foundation extends its hand to coordinate our separate efforts in this regard. Through openness, coordination, and transparency we feel our organizations can be mutually supporting. We also offer, under the right conditions and where the Alumni Agencies adhere to The Cadet Foundation's transparency, accountability and other policies, the potential to engage in joint programs that could include resources from The Cadet Foundation. We, therefore, request the Alumni Agencies to formally recognize The Cadet Foundation as a partnering organization supporting the VMI experience and **look forward to your positive response not later than January 15, 2022.**

As you are likely aware, The Cadet Foundation provides support to Cadets and their activities including, without limitation, *The Cadet* newspaper, VMI Hockey Club, various activities for the companies in barracks, and, most recently a program to pay for Class rings for Cadets in the class of 2023 facing financial hardships. For alumni we have supported programs for the classes of '56, '61 and others the Alumni Agencies or VMI could not or would not support. The Cadet Foundation is also a member of the Alumni Free Speech Alliance (AFSA), American Council of Trustees and Alumni, and the Virginia Council for VMI free-speech and other areas.

Although our mission differs from those of the Alumni Agencies, we feel they are complimentary. While the overall mission of the VMI Alumni Agencies is "to provide support for the Virginia Military Institute (VMI), a State-supported school", The Cadet Foundation's Mission is "to unite alumni and cadets in programs that preserve, protect and advance the core Virginia Military Institute (VMI) ethos of duty, honor, country and development of citizen-soldiers through a shared VMI experience for all." These include, without limitation, merit-based academic scholarships, awards and other initiatives to assist and support cadets. We aim to grow the bond between cadets, alumni and those who support the moral, ethical and other core and traditional positive principles upon which VMI was founded. We support and defend free speech, academic freedom and viewpoint diversity at VMI and for alumni.

The Cadet Foundation fully supports the power and authority of the Corps to run barracks, the Class system, the Ratline, and, especially the Honor Code and system. The Cadet Foundation serves the interests of Alumni and cadets using our proprietary approach, some of which we are sharing with you here to explore our desire to work with the Alumni Agencies where these goals and objectives may align.

You are more aware than most of the troubling times VMI faces and increasing challenges with donors. Many of them approached us to support our programs and others have already shifted their donations to The Cadet Foundation. Through recent media coverage and letters to the VMI Board of Visitors, you are aware of some of those changing their fund commitments from the Alumni Agencies to The Cadet Foundation. Rather than a negative, we see this as a positive for supporting Cadets and alumni as these donors seek another path to continue their support rather than stop donations completely or divert their support to other Institutions or organizations away from VMI as some have already done.

As we expand operations and programs furthering the goals and objectives of our mission, we will operate using an Advisory Board consisting exclusively of cadets and alumni. The alumni members of The Cadet Foundation will be determined by all supporting alumni rather than limited to just those who are able to and do appear in person at an annual meeting. Cadet representatives will be selected by the Corps. All participants commit to the following tenets:

Practice good stewardship - Be especially careful and responsible in the conduct, supervision, and management of The Cadet Foundation in a manner that serves the interests and concerns of all alumni and current cadets.

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Ensure transparency - Execute all operations, functions, policies, and decisions following a thorough, open, and shared dialogue with all alumni and cadets.

Ensure stability - Use sound business practices and deliver through a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) paradigm. This includes providing timely communication with alumni and cadets of all matters affecting the Institute including information which may constitute "bad news".

Maintain unity of purpose - Unite all alumni and cadets in a singular purpose to preserve, improve, and share the VMI experience.

Build trust – Establish confidence in The Cadet Foundation by alumni and cadets with respect to the reliability, truth, ability, and strength of the organization.

Maintain organizational independence – As "a conscience of VMI," we will maintain an "arm's length," but balanced [neutral] relationship with the VMI Administration through the application of performance-based metrics that ensure accountability and productivity of alumni and other funds invested in VMI, only supporting projects that support the Corps, as determined by the Advisory Board that includes current cadets.

Ensure accountability - Drive ethically based decision making to ensure fiscal, moral, and ethical responsibility in all endeavors. Ensure all major expenditures/obligations are reported, and listed on the Cadet Foundation webpage, accessible to all alumni and cadets.

Maintain dedication to the mission – Follow a "One Mission, One Team" approach to management, reflecting the love of the Institute and the desire for the preservation and fostering of an ever-improving VMI experience for all.

Serve as a voice for the alumni while fully supporting and defending freedom of speech for the Corps - Build consensus through credibility and transparency, leading to a confirmed and trusted voice serving alumni and cadets for all relevant matters including ensuring cadets retain editorial control of *The Cadet* and it remains one of the oldest independent college newspapers in Virginia.


Use civility, fairness, and respect in all endeavors - Adhere to a strict and unwavering Code of Conduct, for which nothing less is expected as representatives of VMI, cadets, and alumni.

Maintain unquestioned integrity - Adhere to the Honor Code and the VMI ethos in all things, without exception.

Transparency and accountability are paramount to The Cadet Foundation. The Cadet Foundation was formed and will remain completely independent of the Alumni Agencies and VMI, as any independent organization should. While we will maintain strict separation from the VMI Administration and the Alumni Agencies, our operations and the programmatic decisions will be completely independently and governed by current cadets and alumni participants. Only those who have truly lived the VMI experience can completely appreciate it and so our goal remains that all leadership and major operational positions within the Foundation come strictly from the VMI Family through Cadets and Alumni. We have a VMI alumnus as our endowment and fund manager; the financial advisor and all of The Cadet Foundation's leadership and its proposed Advisory Board are, and will continue to be, exclusively VMI Alumni and current cadets. As we expand we'll add a VMI Alumnus-owned accounting firm and others as required. Current cadets are also on our Board. In addition to implementing annual independent financial reviews and regularly scheduled audits when funds reach appropriate levels, The Cadet Foundation's published annual reports will not only include funds expended at the program level but associated Measures of Performance (MOP) or Measures of Effectiveness (MOE) using detailed metrics and performance measures as a means to demonstrate our impact.

In closing, we again offer this open hand to the Alumni Agencies with the opportunity to work together supporting the VMI Mission as detailed above. We respectfully ask the Alumni Agencies to formally recognize The Cadet Foundation as a partnering organization supporting the VMI experience and look forward both **to your positive response not later than January 15, 2022** and working with you as a peer organization in this important work.

On behalf of The Cadet Foundation and the increasing number of VMI Class leads, individual alumni and cadets participating in this initiative, we truly look forward to the opportunity of working with you in support of our beloved Institute!


Debora Hansen
Secretary
The Cadet Foundation



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