

Report on the Response of Virginia Military Institute to the Impact of the Aging of Virginia's Population

30 April 2008

Pursuant to legislation enacted by the Virginia General Assembly of Virginia, Virginia Military Institute submits this report of its progress in addressing the impact of the aging of Virginia's population.

/ Original Signed /

Robert L. Green
Deputy Superintendent for Finance, Administration and Support

Executive Summary

Because VMI's cadets are all full-time students, there are limited classroom educational opportunities for senior citizens. VMI includes in its catalog the following provision:

Senior Citizens

Pursuant to Virginia Senior Citizen's Higher Education Act, any individual over the age of 60, who is a Virginia domiciliary and earns less than \$15,000 annually, and who otherwise meets the admission criteria of the Virginia Military Institute may attend free of tuition and fees. The admission criteria for summer session are substantially more lenient than the criteria for VMI's full time, academic year, program. VMI does not offer a part-time enrollment option during the regular academic year.

VMI offers cultural and educational programs throughout the academic year, featuring distinguished speakers, theatre productions and musical groups. The weekly cadet review parades also attract many senior citizens. VMI has a close relationship with the local retirement community and many residents attend VMI events.

VMI's Museum programs include the VMI Museum on the VMI Post and the New Market Battlefield State Historical Park. Approximately fifty percent of the visitors to the museums are senior citizens.

VMI has recently renovated the VMI museum to make it accessible to individuals with disabilities.

The Museum program also supports the Elderhostel program offered through the VCU Continuing Education Department.

The George C. Marshall Foundation Museum and Library is on the VMI Post. This museum and its programs attract significant numbers of senior citizens.

VMI has a memorandum of understanding with the regional tourism agency.

VMI's Preston Library is extensively used by seniors for its services, especially the extensive historical research facilities in the VMI archives.

VMI's facilities are used for many community events, such as the 4th of July Balloon Rally, Civil War Roundtable (over 75% of its membership is seniors), American Legion meetings, and others.

Turnover at VMI has been historically low. Most employees remain well past the normal retirement age.

Agency Description

Mission:

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

Roles and Responsibilities:

VMI combines the academic work of a rigorous college curriculum and the exacting regimen of military discipline in the firm conviction that education should be a disciplining of the individual as well as the mind. The essential and mutual purpose of the Institute's combined educational programs (academic studies, barracks life, the military system, and athletics) is to cultivate and develop in each cadet the following seven educational factors:

1. Mastery of a major field of study and commitment to life-long learning.
2. Ability to think critically and creatively
3. Ability to communicate effectively
4. Skill in interpersonal relations
5. Ability to succeed in an organizational setting
6. Commitment to ethical inquiry and standards of integrity
7. Commitment to life-long physical health and vigor.

VMI believes these seven factors represent the requisite characteristics of leaders for the 21st century. VMI believes that academic excellence is best maintained at a small college when the number of disciplines offering degrees is restricted. A cadet may be awarded the degree of bachelor of science with a major in applied mathematics, chemistry, civil engineering, computer science, electrical and computer engineering, mechanical engineering, physics or psychology; the degree of bachelor of arts may be awarded with a major in economics and business, English, history, international studies and political science, modern languages and cultures, or psychology. Either a bachelor of science degree or a bachelor of arts degree may be awarded in biology, chemistry or psychology.

VMI also serves the citizens of the Commonwealth through its museum programs, including the VMI Museum on the VMI Post, and the three-hundred acre New Market Battlefield State Historical Park, site of an 1864 Civil War battle.

Data Requested

- 1. To the extent such data is available, the number of persons who received services from the agency in the past fiscal year who fell into each of the following age ranges: 65-74; 75-84; and 85 and older. If the agency can provide data that compares such numbers to numbers of senior citizens served in the past, please do so. If the agency lacks specific information about the numbers of senior citizens it serves, but has other evidence indicating that it is serving more or fewer senior citizens than it has in the past, please describe the basis for that estimation.*

VMI's Museum programs include the VMI Museum on the VMI Post and the New Market Battlefield State Historical Park. Annually, approximately fifty percent of the 18,000 visitors to the museums are senior citizens. The Museum program also supports the Elderhostel program offered through the VCU Continuing Education Department. The local Natural Bridge chapter offers the most programs of any chapter in the Commonwealth. The Museum Director lectures to 500 senior citizens each year through various programs offered by the Elderhostel program.

- 2. Identify the agency services that are utilized by senior citizens 65 and older in significant numbers. Indicate whether the agency has the capacity at present to serve all interested seniors or whether the demand for certain services exceeds the agency's capacity. If so, does the agency maintain waiting lists for services?*

Services or programs offered by VMI that attract senior citizens include cultural events, distinguished speakers, community theatre productions, musical events, tours of the VMI Post, the museum, and athletic events. The weekly cadet review parades attract many senior citizens. VMI provides seating for senior citizens and individuals with disabilities. All events, with the exception of some athletic events, are free of charge. VMI provides curbside drop off for buses of senior citizens attending athletic events. VMI's library and archives are also open to the general public and are used extensively by seniors. Many seniors use the VMI Archives and its extensive web site for historical research. VMI's facilities are used for many community events, such as the 4th of July Balloon Rally, Civil War Roundtable (over 75% of its membership is seniors), American Legion meetings, and others. Two museums, the VMI Museum and the George C. Marshall Foundation Museum and Library are located on the VMI Post. Both museums attract significant numbers of senior citizens. There is no indication that the demand for any of these programs by senior citizens exceeds VMI's capacity.

- 3. Identify current agency programs, specifically designed to serve seniors 65 and older, that fall into any of the following six categories: Health Care/Wellness; Education; Public Safety; Recreation; Financial Security (including Housing); and Transportation.*

VMI does not have any programs specifically designed to serve seniors 65 and older. As mentioned in #2 above, some of VMI's programs are attractive to seniors.

Education: museum programs distinguished speakers, and lectures. Recreation: cultural/music programs. As mentioned in #2 above, VMI makes its facilities available to many groups with many senior citizen members such as the Civil War Roundtable and the American Legion.

- 4. Identify the extent to which your agency provides “consumer-oriented” publications and websites online that are designed to be “senior-friendly.” If the information you currently provide is not readily accessible to seniors, identify any steps your agency is taking to improve accessibility.*

VMI provides information on its website on upcoming events that are open to the public. VMI also provides this information to the local newspaper and the Lexington Visitors' Center. VMI has a memorandum of understanding with the regional tourism agency.

- 5. Describe the effect that the aging of the agency’s own workforce will have on its ability to deliver services. Consider the number of retirements expected in the next two years, the effect these retirements might have (e.g., loss of leadership or institutional knowledge in certain programs), how losses might be replaced (e.g. promotions or transfers, recruitment, use of wage staff, including retirees, reengineering, outsourcing), and the costs or savings from the replacements (e.g. staff development cost, salary savings). This item might be addressed by summarizing relevant portions of the agency’s workforce plan.*

VMI's close-knit community and Lexington's small-town environment cause many employees to stay long beyond their retirement eligibility dates. Consequently, turnover at VMI is low and employees anticipating retirement typically provide many months' notice of their departure. Approximately 21 percent (24) VMI's teaching faculty are age 60 or older. Half of these are engineering and science faculty and the other half are liberal arts faculty. VMI expects the turnover rate for teaching faculty to continue at about three or four faculty members per year. Usually, there is adequate notice to conduct national searches for replacements. Recent economic concerns have heightened concern over recruitment success. Approximately ten percent (12) of VMI's senior and middle managers (administrative faculty members) are age 60 or older. VMI anticipates a spike in retirements among this group in about six or seven years. Losses will be replaced through promotions and recruitments. Finally, approximately 14 percent of VMI's support staff employees are age 60 or older. These employees are distributed across the VMI Post, so the losses can be replaced through promotions and recruitments.

- 6. Describe any other services or programs that the agency has implemented or plans to implement in the future to address the impact of the aging of Virginia’s population.*