

# THE VMI ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



## Procedures and General Operations Guidebook for Chapter Presidents

*The VMI Alumni Association  
P.O. Box 932  
Lexington, VA 24450  
800-444-1839  
[www.vmialumni.org](http://www.vmialumni.org)*

Rev. 6/3/2019



Chapter Presidents,

Thank you for your willingness to assume the role of VMI Alumni Association chapter president. That act speaks volumes to your dedication to our mission of informing, engaging and inspiring our beloved alumni. Our alumni are scattered across the globe, and what you do to keep them together is vital to our overall success. The enclosed handbook is designed to be a resource for you and your chapter leadership in order to facilitate efficient operations and to ensure you have what you need to conduct well attended and well received VMI alumni events.

With each chapter acting independently, we do realize that there is a significant variation between chapters and how they are organized and function. As such, we encourage you to be creative in developing events and activities for your chapter. Further, we feel it is important to be organized and proactive; however, it is even more important to have fun and enjoy the camaraderie of a fully functioning and active chapter. A fully functioning and active chapter will bring benefits to alumni through networking opportunities, as well as helping alumni to continue to establish bonds together.

Again, thank you for what you do. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly or any other member of the full-time staff here in Lexington if you have any questions. We are here to serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Brashears', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Thomas A. Brashears '95  
Chief Operating Officer, VMI Alumni Association

## Table of Contents

Chapter Structure and Organization.....	3
Procedures for Scheduling Chapter Meetings.....	4
Program Outreach/Support of Admissions and Career Networking.....	6
Chapter Reporting .....	7

## Enclosures

Enclosure 1: Miscellaneous VMI Contacts/Information

Enclosure 2: Sample Chapter Bylaws

Bylaws are not required, but this sample provides guidance for chapter leadership if they wish to establish bylaws.

Enclosure 3: Best Practices for Planning a Chapter Event

Guidance for planning and executing a function at the chapter level

Enclosure 4: Annual Planning Calendar for Chapter Activities

Suggestions for when to plan and hold events

Enclosure 5: Timeline for Planning a Chapter Event

Provides detailed guidance for planning an event

Enclosure 6: Template - Annual Chapter Event Summary

Template for documenting the activities of the chapter in the past fiscal year

Enclosure 6 (a) Sample - Annual Chapter Event Summary

## **Chapter Structure and Organization**

The mission of The VMI Alumni Association states:

“The general purpose of the corporation (The Alumni Association) is to organize the alumni of the Virginia Military Institute in one general body, so as to better to keep alive the memories of Institute life, and by their united efforts, more efficiently to aid in the promotion of the welfare of the Institute and the successful prosecution of its education purposes in the future.”

The VMI Alumni Association wants chapters to organize our alumni with four (4) purposes in mind:

1. Keep the VMI spirit intact by having active alumni chapters to link alumni together in a geographical area and to link them back to VMI.
2. Help recruit the best candidates to apply to VMI.
3. Involve our senior alumni (over 40 years out of school) and young alumni (less than 15 years out of school) – including holding special events for them when possible.
4. Take care of each other, build professional and personal connections across generations, and use our bond to help those in need.

This mission, of course, is strongly connected to the kind of job that you and your chapter officers do on the chapter level during each year. As you probably know, the Alumni Association and other Alumni Agencies operate on the fiscal year of July 1-June 30. For your reporting, we now ask that you report activities based on the calendar year.

Chapters should be structured to meet the needs and circumstances of their particular situation. It is recommended that every chapter have at least three officers: President, vice president and chapter representative. Their key roles include but are not limited to:

- President: initiate/oversee all chapter operations/events/activities. The President will establish committees on an as needed basis to assist in chapter operations and events. The President will also report events/activities to their respective Regional Director.
- Vice president: Assist the president and to be prepared to replace the president. The vice president will assist the president with the execution of chapter events. There should be a succession plan in place so the vice president will be able to move into the president’s position in the future.
- Chapter Rep: The chapter rep duties are delineated in the Alumni Association bylaws (Article II section 2.3). Per the bylaws each active chapter president shall be entitled to appoint one chapter representative. The chapter representative shall be entitled to participate in the activities of the BOD except for voting. They are to be a “communications link” between the VMIAA (staff in Moody Hall) and the

chapter. Will assist with chapter leadership and other duties as assigned/needed. Also, the Chapter representative could succeed the vice president if the need arose.

The Chapter Leadership Team should continuously update an annual Chapter Planning Calendar in such a manner as to always have a twelve-month planning horizon with potential chapter events penciled in (with projected dates).

The VMI Alumni Association Board of Directors (and its committees) meets three times per year over a Friday/Saturday time period – usually on Post. All chapter leadership team members are encouraged to occasionally attend these weekends. All committee meetings (except the Nominations Committee) are open to any alum attending. The Saturday morning board of directors meeting is also open to all alumni to sit in and get a more fully informed knowledge of how the VMIAA functions.

Each year, normally in the spring, a Volunteer Leadership Conference is held (Friday and Saturday) in conjunction with the spring alumni board of directors meeting at VMI. This conference is held in conjunction with the VMI Foundation and is an outstanding opportunity for chapter officers to interact with their fellow volunteer leaders from around the country. Meetings on a variety of subjects are held and panel discussions and training programs are conducted. Chapter officers are strongly encouraged to attend this conference.

The VMI Alumni Association maintains a webpage for each chapter located at [www.vmialumni.org](http://www.vmialumni.org).

## **Procedures for Scheduling Chapter Meetings**

The VMI Alumni Association looks forward to assisting your chapter. We hope that your chapter will be active and strive to bring alumni, family and friends together. When you are ready to host an event, please visit [www.vmialumni.org/submityourevent](http://www.vmialumni.org/submityourevent) to notify the Alumni Association of your intentions. Our team will then work with you to ensure that all of your needs are met. Consider the information below before filling out the online event form.

1. Select a date  
Start by choosing a date that works best for your chapter. Consider conflicting events in your area. Collecting the thoughts of the chapter leadership team or emailing a core group of alumni to get their input is suggested.  
(For additional guidance, see Enclosures 2, 3, 4 and 5)
2. Meetings/Events:  
Ideally, chapters should meet two to three times a year. To remain being classified as an active chapter, you need at least one chapter event/activity annually. An annual cycle of activities/events may include something in these time frames:

Founders Day (Nov. 11)  
Mid-winter event

A New Market Day event  
An early August event for a Rat Send Off.

(See Enclosures 3, 4 and 5 for additional information)

3. Suggested Events:

Picnics go across well as do dinners out. Ball games, golf, river cruises, the races or meeting to watch a VMI game in person or on TV have worked well for other chapters. Be innovative!

4. Pick a Location

The location of the event can range from the home of an alumnus, private club where an alumnus is a member, local hotel, restaurants with a private dining area, local park, etc.

5. Set Event Price and Registration Process

Give alumni a process by which to register in advance for events. The preferred method is a “**collect the money in advance**” approach using the VMIAA website and its registration process. You may set up this approach by contacting the event coordinator or program outreach officer in the Alumni Association. Alumni can then pay for the event with a credit card directly to the Alumni Association. The other option is a “**collect monies locally**” plan. If the event is held at a restaurant, baseball game, etc., the attendee sends in an advance payment to a local alumnus or pays at the event. **The important thing is to avoid being on the hook for money that is not collected!**

6. Request a Speaker

Chapters should not expect speakers for every event. If planning to have a speaker from Lexington, contact the Alumni Association COO in Moody Hall and make a request. This must be done as far in advance as possible in order to allow time to get a commitment. A copy of the speaker’s biography should also be obtained. Money is often tight, so VMI tends to send speakers to events where a large crowd is expected.

7. Send Chapter Mailing

All costs associated with mailing (US Mail and mass email) invitations are covered by the VMI Alumni Association. The Alumni Association will create a flyer based upon chapter input for the event. Send your input that will be sent to the chapter members to the Alumni Association’s event coordinator or program outreach officer for distribution. Remember to include information on the time, place and price. A map to the event should also be included. The letter or flyer needs to get to chapter members approx. 3-4 weeks in advance of the meeting.

8. Consider “door prize drawings/giveaways” for this event

Attendees at chapter events love receiving something – even if it is on a random basis. Think about a range of possibilities – from VMI related items (thru the VMIAA staff) to non-VMI items (possible donations from companies or alumni).

9. Chapter Rosters

VMI alumni move often, and sometimes VMI is the last to know. We ask the chapters to help us update rosters and tell us of any moves, changes and deaths. All forms of communication can be used: US mail, email and social media. Ask for a chapter roster update from the VMIAA staff before an event.

## **Program Outreach – Support of Admissions and Career Networking**

Support of admissions is the life blood of the Institute. Recruiting men and women of high caliber is essential to the continued success of VMI. Support of admissions events are collaborative efforts between the Alumni Association, the Admissions Office, and the Alumni Chapters.

1. Each chapter is encouraged to establish a Support of admissions team. Ideally this would be a 3-5 (sometimes larger) person team. The team should establish a Support of admissions rep who will keep the Chapter President apprised of all efforts in recruiting. The support of admissions team will work with the Program Outreach Officer on the Alumni Association staff. The Program Outreach Officer will assist and provide support for support of admissions functions. Support will include but is not limited to; supplying informational literature, attending events and providing info on open house weekends.
2. The Chapter support of admissions rep will file a brief report with the new cadet recruiter (typically the program outreach coordinator) at the Alumni Association after each recruiting event. This report will include, number of prospects, contact info and alumni who attended.
3. Large college fairs are normally scheduled through the admissions office. If costs are incurred, they are paid by VMI Admissions. Chapters are also encouraged to search out local college fairs that they could participate in. Contacting high school guidance officers are a good way to get information on local college fairs.  
VMI admissions office contact number: 540-464-7211

Chapters can be a great place for VMI alumni to grow their network. Many chapters host alumni networking events. We highly encourage you to engage your chapters this way. Hosting a networking event works the same way as any other event. The team in Moody Hall can assist you each step of the way. As a chapter president, you should familiarize yourself with the career networking resources available on the VMIAA website. Additionally, please feel free to refer alumni to the VMI Alumni Association LinkedIn page where they can find job postings and other important information.

## **Chapter Reporting**

Chapters are requested on an annual basis to compile periodic reports of their chapter leaders, activities and future plans.

Enclosures 6 and 6(a) are a template and a sample of an Annual Chapter Summary. **A copy of this summary needs to be sent to your respective regional director as well as the director of administration at the Alumni Association no later than Jan. 15 of each year.**



## ENCLOSURE 1:

### Miscellaneous VMI Contacts/Information

<u>Mailing Address</u>	<u>Street Address (FedEx or UPS deliveries)</u>	
P.O. Box 932 Lexington, VA 24450 T: 800-444-1839	Moody Hall Letcher Avenue, Lexington, VA 24450 F: 540-464-1011	
Thomas Brashears '95	Chief Operating Officer	<a href="mailto:tbrashears@vmiaa.org">tbrashears@vmiaa.org</a>
Sam Sorrells	Director of Administration	<a href="mailto:ssorrells@vmiaa.org">ssorrells@vmiaa.org</a>
Avis Slagle	Director of Stewardship	<a href="mailto:aslagle@vmiaa.org">aslagle@vmiaa.org</a>
Christina Hatcher	Director of Event Management	<a href="mailto:chatcher@vmiaa.org">chatcher@vmiaa.org</a>
Tammy Horn	Event Coordinator	<a href="mailto:thorn@vmiaa.org">thorn@vmiaa.org</a>
Becky Clemmer	Alumni Agencies Receptionist	<a href="mailto:bclemmer@vmiaa.org">bclemmer@vmiaa.org</a>
Patti Cook	Director of Reunions	<a href="mailto:pcook@vmiaa.org">pcook@vmiaa.org</a>
Corri Sensabaugh	Assistant Director of Reunions	<a href="mailto:csensabaugh@vmiaa.org">csensabaugh@vmiaa.org</a>
Pam Harris	Reunion Activity Coordinator	<a href="mailto:pharris@vmiaa.org">pharris@vmiaa.org</a>
Norma Robinson	Office Manager	<a href="mailto:nrobinson@vmiaa.org">nrobinson@vmiaa.org</a>
TJ Lighton '15	Director of Alumni Outreach	<a href="mailto:tlighton@vmiaa.org">tlighton@vmiaa.org</a>
Megan Ayers '19	Program Outreach Officer	<a href="mailto:mayers@vmiaa.org">mayers@vmiaa.org</a>

### Who do I contact for information?

**Thom Brashears:** Chief operating officer, general information

**Tamera Horn:** Event registration and communication

**Sam Sorrells:** Alumni activity and information about Moody Hall

**Christina Hatcher:** Questions surrounding large events such as the Institute Society Dinner or Legislative Reception

**Becky Clemmer:** Moody Hall reservations

**Patti Cook:** Reunion coordination

**Corri Sensabaugh:** Reunion coordination

**Norma Robinson:** Alumni Association general information

**Megan Ayers:** Chapter events, support of admissions, career networking

**TJ Lighton:** Support of admissions, coordinating chapter events and chapter communications

## **ENCLOSURE 2:**

### **SAMPLE CHAPTER BY-LAWS**

#### **ARTICLE I – NAME**

The name of this organization shall be: XYZ Chapter of the VMI Alumni Association.

#### **ARTICLE II – PURPOSES**

The purposes of this chapter are:

1. To renew and foster good fellowship among VMI alumni.
2. To strengthen our ties with and to provide support for VMI, and to keep our members informed of what VMI is doing and planning.
3. To cooperate in programs of the VMI Alumni Association such as new cadet recruiting, rat send-offs and helping those VMI alumni in need.

#### **ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP**

1. All graduates and matriculates of VMI in good standing at the time of their departure from the Institute are eligible for membership beginning on the graduation date of their class.
2. Individuals designated as honorary alumni of VMI are eligible for membership.
3. Present and former faculty members, spouses of deceased alumni and parents of current VMI cadets living in a chapter area are eligible for membership upon invitation issued by the chapters.

#### **ARTICLE IV – DUES**

Chapters are discouraged from collecting dues unless the majority of the chapter agrees. Monies collected must be auditable, and a report should be generated to the chapter annually.

#### **ARTICLE V – MEETINGS**

The chapter will hold a minimum of one and are encouraged to hold three regular meetings or events a year. Additional meetings or events may be scheduled as deemed necessary.

#### **ARTICLE VI – CHAPTER DIRECTORS**

Chapters will decide how to structure their leadership. The following formal chapter leadership positions are suggested: President, vice president and a chapter representative. Terms of office are at the discretion of the VMI alumni board and chapter membership. An appointment as a chapter president needs to be approved by the Alumni Association COO (through the appropriate regional director), and other chapter officers need to be approved by the appropriate regional director. Chapters will select other chapter leadership team members.

## **ENCLOSURE 2 (continued)**

### **ARTICLE VIII – COMMITTEES**

The following chapter committees should be considered and are encouraged based on the size and needs of the chapter: New cadet recruiting, career networking, senior alumni and young alumni.

## **ENCLOSURE 3**

### **BEST PRACTICES FOR PLANNING A VMI ALUMNI CHAPTER EVENT**

#### Event Planning Chronology:

- Decide on date/time and type of event
- Secure venue
- Arrange for food and speaker(s) – if appropriate
- Decide on registration fee (**Have attendees pay in advance!**)
- Develop invitation and publicity plan/approach
- Submit your event information through the online form on the VMIAA website
- Send out invitation via email and US Mail thru VMIAA (Moody Hall)
- Make coordination visit to venue and talk with appropriate manager(s); ensure that manager/person-in-charge at actual time of event is present at coordination meetings
- Send out reminder messages about registering through VMIAA (Moody Hall)
- Make reminder telephone calls and ask them to bring someone else!
- Recruit enough alumni attendees to staff the event check-in/name tags/50-50 raffle
- During the week before event, make one last visit to facility for review with manager(s)
- Record names of all persons who actually attend and be prepared to collect cash from those not pre-registered
- At event, thank those involved in putting it together and manning the different roles during the event; recognize special visitors (oldest/youngest alumni, staff/board members of the VMIAA and alumni widows)
- Keep receipts for all expenses
- Several days after the event (when all invoices/bills have been paid), a reimbursement request needs to be submitted with event attendance list and paid receipts to VMIAA for release of any monies collected through the VMIAA website
- Solicit feedback on the event
- Keep written notes on “lessons learned” from the whole sequence in putting on the event

#### Other “Lessons Learned” from multiple VMIAA chapter events:

- USE EACH EVENT AS A FORUM TO SOLICIT HELP FROM YOUR CHAPTER MEMBERS. WITH A SMILE, REMIND THEM THAT YOU ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS TO HELP RUN THE CHAPTER.
- Have a “Plan B” – Weather, overflow attendance, speaker no show, etc.
- Coordinate timing of food serving/eating with speaker presentation
- Ensure an adequate sound system is available
- Provide name tags, banners, balloons and centerpieces (as appropriate)
- Treat event as a celebration

### **ENCLOSURE 3 (continued)**

- Provide and staff a “welcome/sign-in table”
- Make sure the sign-in sheet has a spot for email address and phone number! This is a great way to stay current on communications with your chapter members.
- Rotate coverage of event roles so that no one is “on duty” for the whole event.
- Take pictures
- Provide door prizes to raffle winners – contact VMIAA (well in advance) for some giveaways; tap into your alumni who may work for companies with products that they can donate
- Solicit input from your regional director on latest news from VMI; he/she can provide relevant news that you can share with alumni at the event.
- Make brief notes regarding the event as soon after the event as possible; this will make your end-of-year report simpler and less time-consuming.

## **ENCLOSURE 4**

### **EXAMPLE - Annual Planning Calendar for Chapter Activities**

*Below is a “best case scenario” for planning out activities for a chapter a year in advance. This is an optimal example in which a chapter is able to conduct multiple social events, new cadet recruiting events, and college fairs. Use it as a target to shoot for based on your chapter’s resources, available time and pool of alumni volunteers. Ideally, each chapter will execute a subset of this schedule each year.*

#### Winter

Prepare summary of chapter’s activities in last fiscal year  
VMI Info Night for local high juniors and sophomores  
Young alumni activity (ex. happy hour)  
Senior alumni gathering  
Visit local high school guidance offices  
Plan an event around a VMI basketball game

#### Spring

Visit local high school guidance offices  
Senior alumni gathering  
Young alumni activity (ex. happy hour)  
New Market Day event

#### Summer

Rat send-off event  
Family picnic/informally gather at local community event

#### Fall

Attend and man tables at local college fairs  
Visit local high school guidance offices  
Young alumni activity (ex. happy hour)  
Senior alumni gathering  
Plan an event around a VMI football game  
Founders Day event

## **ENCLOSURE 5:**

### **TIMELINE FOR PLANNING / EXECUTING A VMI CHAPTER EVENT**

<u>Timeframe in Advance Of Event Date</u>	<u>Action</u>
3 to 9 months	Develop an idea of the event's content/purpose/general timing
6 months (if possible)	Assign the three-person team that will handle the event and designate the person-in-charge
3 to 6 months	Contact Thom Brashears at the VMIAA for help with inviting a speaker for event (if applicable). Guest speakers from the Institute or the Alumni Agencies must be approved by COO of the VMIAA so that costs can be handled accordingly
60 days	Reserve/confirm event's physical site details and arrangements. Choose the event's food menu (if applicable) and decide the cost/entrance fee per person/participant to the event
45 days	Submit Event to the VMIAA at <a href="http://www.vmialumni.org/submityourevent">www.vmialumni.org/submityourevent</a> so that office staff can set up website registration and send out email/US mail mailings to the desired alumni chapter mailing list
20 to 30 days	Begin getting update lists from VMIAA that contain current/up-to-date lists of registrants
3 weeks	Start chapter telephone-tree calling of reminder calls (if desired)
15 days	Reconfirm all arrangements with site facility and event speaker
1 week	From the list of registrants signed up for the event, arrange for two or three people to handle name tags and "welcoming," at least one person to handle the 50/50 ticket sales and one person to be the designated money person (if necessary)
Day of event	Have several persons at the event's location 30 minutes ahead of the designated start time Ensure that the person introducing the speaker has the appropriate information At conclusion of event, insure that one person closes out with the event facility (reviews any problems, reinforces the timeframe for final payment for the event's fees, etc.)

## **ENCLOSURE 5 (continued):**

Days after the event

Prepare an “Actual Attendees” list

Prepare a “Financial Summary” of the event showing all cost and all sources of funds to pay those costs

Prepare a “Lessons Learned” list from event

Submit request for reimbursement of monies collected through the VMIAA website



## **ENCLOSURE 6:**

### **TEMPLATE - Annual Chapter Activity Summary**

Name of Chapter \_\_\_\_\_  
Year Covered: 20XX (January 1 thru December 31)  
Person compiling this Summary \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter Officers/Directors/Leadership Team members (as of 1/1/20XX)

President –  
Vice President –  
Chapter Rep –

Others -

Chapter Events Held

Highlights of Past Year

Projected Chapter Activities for Next Year (20XX-XX)

## ENCLOSURE 6a

### Sample Annual Chapter Summary

Note: This sample report is for a past fiscal year. Current reports are tied to the calendar year and have been reformatted.

#### Charlotte Chapter Summary of Fiscal Year

Year Covered: 20XX-XX (July 1-June 30)

#### Chapter Events Held

- Aug. 10, 20XX: Chapter happy hour and networking social
- Dec. 6, 20XX: New cadet recruiting
- Jan. 7, 20XX: VMI Basketball pregame
- Feb. 25, 20XX: Super Brawl 3 Boxing (Todd Wilson '06 professional fight)
- March 3, 20XX: Big South Championship
- March 4: Chapter outing at professional athletic event
- March 11: Chapter supports college fair
- Apr 13, 20XX: Chapter golf outing
- May 8, 20XX: Chapter happy hour and networking social

#### Highlights of Past Year

The most excitement for the chapter was welcoming Reggie Williams '08 to Charlotte and his trade to the Charlotte Bobcats. Reggie was gracious with his time after the game and met with the chapter and signed autographs for the kids. Also, the chapter rekindled the summer barbecue at the home of Pat Morgan '54 – this was technically last fiscal year in May 2011. Col. Gibson traveled from VMI to speak about the history of VMI.

#### Chapter Officers

- Name and VMI class, President
- Name and VMI class, VP
- Name and VMI class, Chapter Rep
- Other board members

## **ENCLOSURE 2a (continued)**

### Projected chapter activities for the next calendar year

- Aug. 10, 20XX: Old Corps lunch. We plan to make this a regularly scheduled event for the senior alum in the chapter. Dates and frequency TBD.
- Aug. 11, 20XX: Chapter picnic and rat send-off
- Oct. 27, 20XX: VMI football tailgate
- Nov. 10, 20XX: VMI football watch party
- Dec./Jan. TBD: VMI basketball game
- Feb. 8: Chapter happy hour and networking social
- March 15: Chapter happy hour and networking social
- May 4: Golf outing