

Quality Enhancement Plan – Executive Summary
Virginia Military Institute

***Implementing a New Core Curriculum:
The Nucleus of Effective Citizenship and Leadership***

The Virginia Military Institute's new Core Curriculum is a common and mutually reinforcing set of courses and experiences designed to cultivate the essential characteristics of the citizen-soldier—a person of character who is able to anticipate, respond, and lead in a complex and changing world.

Through required courses and carefully managed elective opportunities, cadets develop *habits of mind* (learning to read, think, inquire, and communicate effectively) and *habits of living* (committing themselves to ethical behavior and lifelong learning and wellness). This nucleus of experience enables their development as students and prepares them to become strong contributors to their communities, their professions, and the nation following graduation.

The Core Curriculum is integrated across all four years of the cadetship, providing knowledge and experiences that expand, inform, and facilitate cadets' specialized study in the major discipline of their choice. Courses are taught with an explicit effort to stimulate cadets' intellectual curiosity and awareness of why these requirements have been established as the core academic contribution to the Institute's mission to develop citizen-soldiers.

Supporting Academic Program Goals that are part of the Institute's Strategic Plan, the Core Curriculum is organized in four components:

- A. **Key Competencies** (25 credit hours, including courses in *written communication, oral communication, scientific analysis, mathematical reasoning, and physical education*)
- B. **Foundations of Citizenship and Leadership** (15 credit hours, including courses in *leadership, ROTC, and the history and traditions of VMI*)
- C. **Perspectives on Civilization and Human Achievement** (12 credit hours, including courses in *world history* and electives in "*Civilizations and Cultures*")
- D. **Integrative Experiences** (variable credit hours, including *writing-intensive courses and a capstone experience in the major*)

The Core Curriculum is administered by faculty appointed by the Dean to an Oversight Committee, which is empowered to approve, assess, and evaluate courses and activities related to the Core, particularly as they realize the learning outcomes that the new Core is designed to achieve. The committee includes a representative from each academic department and is chaired by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

VMI is undertaking the phased implementation of its new Core Curriculum as its Quality Enhancement Plan. It is a vast and complex endeavor, but one that promises significant improvements in student learning in the foundational elements of a VMI education.

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