

VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE
Lexington, Virginia

GENERAL ORDER)
NUMBER 79)

25 June 2026

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR AND SPEAKER POLICY

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to establish standard procedures and guidelines for invitation and approval of distinguished guests and speakers.
2. **Scope:** Distinguished visitors as defined by this policy include, but are not limited to, members of the United States Congress, state legislators, state government officials from the cabinet or deputy level, federal government or agency officials from the cabinet or deputy level, ambassadors, general officers and flag officers in the Armed Forces, and candidates for public office. Speakers as defined by this policy include any individual other than VMI employees or currently enrolled cadets who makes a scheduled address or remarks at any location on Post. This policy will be applied equally and without regard to political affiliation of a distinguished visitor or speaker. Except as otherwise permitted by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, VMI will not abridge the freedom of invited guests to speak on Post.
3. **Request Requirements:**
 - A. Distinguished visitors: Prior to any distinguished guest visit, the requestor must gain approval from the respective department head, then the Superintendent's Office through the Assistant Superintendent Operations and Planning. If the distinguished guest visit will be associated with an event on Post, then the requirements of General Order 72 will apply. All approval requests must include:
 1. Name of distinguished visitor, biography & date of visit.
 2. The VMI employee point of contact including name, email, and phone number.
 3. The nature of the visit and length/duration.
 4. Schedule of events--including any possible tours of barracks or Post.
 5. Facilities requested for any event with the distinguished visitor.
 6. Estimated number of individuals attending.
 7. Estimated number of vehicles on Post, as a result of the visit and any event with the distinguished visitor.
 8. Special needs/handicapped support requirements.
 9. Whether a courtesy visit with the Superintendent is needed or desired; and
 10. Support requirements, including law enforcement/EMT.
 - B. Speakers: All requests for speakers and events associated with speakers, whether organized by an employee or cadet or a non-affiliated individual, must be submitted to the Assistant Superintendent Operations and Planning in accordance with the requirements of General Order 72, Facilities Utilization, Events, and Speech at least 60 days in advance of the planned speaking event. Requests for speakers from academic departments must be submitted using 25 Live scheduling software.

- C. If the distinguished visitor or speaker is not a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, the Office of Finance and Budget must be notified at the time of the request for approval to ensure compliance with regulations pertaining to visas and payments or reimbursements.

- 4. **Coordination:** Visits by speakers and distinguished guests must be scheduled in accordance with the operating rules of the Institute Schedule as prescribed in General Order 1. All speakers and visits by distinguished guests, including those who do not require a contract as prescribed by section 5 below, will be coordinated by the Office of the Assistant Superintendent of Operations and Planning including scheduling, verifying that any event associated with a speaker or distinguished guest is an authorized activity for the requested location, and ensuring that all support agencies (Communications & Marketing, Physical Plant, Auxiliary Services, VMI Police) have adequate time and resources to support the event, to include set-up and recovery from the event. The Office of the Assistant Superintendent for Operations and Planning will notify the Government Relations Director if the guest speaker is a government official.

5. Contracts and Expenses.

- A. Departments will be responsible for working with Procurement Services to prepare a contract for speakers who will receive some form of compensation – i.e., speaker fee/honorarium or payment/reimbursement for related expenses. The Institute will not enter a contract or reimburse expenses for a speaker invited by cadets or a cadet organization, the Alumni Agencies, or a non-affiliated individual or organization. Speaker contracts will be one of the following two types:
 - 1. No-fee contract. If a speaker does not request a speaking fee, then a no-fee contract is required to document the services and expenses to be covered by the Institute, including travel and lodging. If the sponsoring department decides after execution of the no-fee contract to pay the speaker an honorarium, such honorarium must be approved by Procurement Services prior to submission of the Receiving Report/Request for Reimbursement to the Office of Finance and Budget. A request for payment of an honorarium must reach the Office of Finance and Budget no later than two weeks prior to the speaker's event and must include evidence of Procurement Services approval and a copy of the speaker contract. A payment to a speaker can be considered an honorarium only if the speaker has signed a no-fee contract documenting an intent to donate his or her services. If a department anticipates paying a speaker an honorarium, then a no fee contract must be executed prior to the speaking engagement. If a no fee contract has not been executed, then payment of an honorarium to the speaker will not be authorized.
 - 2. For-fee contract. An established fee or fee suggested by a speaker is not an honorarium payment. Such fees will be detailed in a for-fee contract along with expenses to be covered by the Institute, including travel and lodging.
- B. Travel and lodging. The sponsoring department shall submit an Authorization for Official Institute Travel form listing any travel expenses of the speaker to be covered by the Institute and the source of funding. State travel regulations apply. Air travel shall be arranged by the sponsoring department through VMI travel agents. Lodging arrangements also shall be made by the sponsoring department for direct billing to the Institute. As lodging on Post is limited, most speakers who require overnight

accommodations will stay off Post. All requests for reimbursement of speaker travel expenses must be submitted on the Travel Reimbursement Form.

- C. Regardless of whether the speaker has a no-fee or a for-fee contract, speakers receiving any form of compensation including travel expenses must submit a W-9 (or W-8BEN for foreign speakers) form to the Finance and Budget Office in accordance with Internal Revenue Service regulations before the speaker contract can be executed.

- 6. **Audience and Compensatory Time:** The department head, cadet organization, or non-affiliated individual or organization planning the speaker event is responsible for ensuring that any guest speaker has an adequate audience. If a speaking event is significantly related to the subject of an academic course, the instructor may, with the permission of the department head, substitute attendance at the speaker event for attendance at a scheduled class meeting, with the understanding that attendance at the speaker event will be checked. Mandating cadet attendance at an academic speaking event requires an instructor to grant compensatory class time, which should occur preferably within one week before or after the required speaker event but not to exceed two weeks before or after the speaker event.

FOR THE SUPERINTENDENT:

Travis Homiak
Colonel, USMC (Ret.)
Chief of Staff

DIST: E

OPR: Op & Planning