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MEMORANDUM TO THE VMI BOARD OF VISITORS THROUGH THE ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: Approval of Changes to the Faculty Handbook

Background

The Board of Visitors is charged with the responsibility of approving changes in VMI regulations. The *Faculty Handbook* was last updated in May 2024. The proposed change (Enclosure (1)) to the *Faculty Handbook – May 2024* would permit the extension of the probationary period for Teaching & Research faculty up to two additional years due to medical or parental leave. The Dean could authorize additional extensions in extraordinary circumstances. This proposed change has been approved by the Academic Board and is submitted for the approval of the Board of Visitors. The *Faculty Handbook* with the proposed addition is renamed the *Faculty Handbook – September 2024*.

Recommended Motion

“The Academic Affairs Committee has considered the proposed changes to the Faculty Handbook, which now shall be entitled the *Faculty Handbook – September 2024*. I move that the Board of Visitors approve the *Faculty Handbook – September 2024* and that it be made part of the minutes.”



Cedric T. Wins '85

Major General, U.S. Army (Retired)

Superintendent

Tenure and Promotion Calendars

The following proposed changes to the “Probationary Appointments and the Tenure Process” section in the Faculty Handbook (p. 39) would permit the extension of the probationary period for Teaching & Research faculty up to two additional years due to medical or parental leave. The Dean could authorize additional extensions in extraordinary circumstances:

2. Probationary Appointments and the Tenure Process

- a. VMI normally adds members to its faculty by means of probationary appointments. A probationary appointment is for a stated length of time and entails no implication of reappointment. During the probationary period, an untenured faculty member has the same academic freedom that all faculty have.
- b. The total period of full-time service at VMI prior to the acquisition of tenure will not exceed seven years, and the tenure review date will be specified in the employment agreement. Time spent on leave of absence will not count as probationary period service, unless the individual and the Dean agree to the contrary, in writing, at the time leave is granted. This rule does not apply to faculty development leaves, which do count for probationary period service. The standard probationary period of full-time service at VMI prior to the consideration for tenure is six years, and the tenure review date will be specified in the employment agreement. Faculty members taking a leave of absence of at least eight weeks (including Personal Medical Leave and Parental Leave) are eligible to extend the probationary period. Faculty may extend their established probationary period twice, each time for one year.
 - i. Faculty members must consult with their Department Head before the end of the specified leave period and then submit to the Dean a form [link to form] indicating whether they do, or do not, wish to extend the probationary period by one year.
 - ii. If there are extraordinary circumstances, the Dean may allow a faculty member to extend their probationary period more than twice.
 - iii. This policy does not apply to faculty development leaves, which do count for probationary period service.
- c. The tenured faculty should provide leadership, example, and guidance for the probationary faculty, and their relationship should be one of collegiality...