Strategic Plan
2010 - 2015
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Valley Forge Military College, founded in 1935, is a co-educational two-year college for students seeking to transfer to a four-year college, university, or service academy. The college features an Early Commissioning Program (ECP) that is one of five offered in the United States. ECP graduates are commissioned as Second Lieutenants in the U.S. Army. In addition, the Service Academy Prep Program supports entry to the U.S. service academies: Army, Navy, Air Force, Merchant Marine, Coast Guard. Traditional students enroll in associate degree programs in Arts, Science, and Business Administration.

 Philosophy

The College seeks to educate every student in a manner that contributes to and reinforces the student’s capabilities to confidently seek and pursue the challenges of life. Valley Forge Military College supports this goal by using the holistic academic and military environment as the integrative mechanism to prepare its graduates to become educated citizen leaders of character. The dynamics of the structured and supervised cadet-led community promote commitment to responsible, informed, ethical citizen leadership.

 Mission of Valley Forge Military College

The Mission of Valley Forge Military College is to educate students within an academic and military environment to transfer to academically competitive four-year colleges, universities or service academies. The College builds leaders of character for the future, for the community, for the country, for the world.

(A Substantive Change Proposal will be submitted to MSCHE September 2010)

To accomplish this VFMC promotes on academic excellence, assessment of student learning, and student learning assistance through the Learning Assessment and Support Center. Recognizing the value of the co-curricular programs in Cadet Life, the College focuses on student character development, personal motivation, physical development, and leadership skills. The overarching goal is the development of the whole person for lifetime learning and leadership.
Introduction

Values
The Five Cornerstones form the heart of Valley Forge Military College values. VFMC’s commitment to these cornerstones defines and distinguishes who we are as a College.

The Five Cornerstones
Academic Excellence - VFMC’s educational programs prepare students to transfer to the nation’s finest four-year colleges, universities and research institutions appropriate to the personal and professional goals of each student.
Character Development - VFMC students follow a standard of conduct centered on Honor Code and system, enhanced spiritual values and service to others.
Personal Motivation - VFMC students are encouraged through positive competition, teamwork and goal setting to strive for excellence as individuals and as members of a group.
Physical Development - Through an integration of health and physical education, physical training and athletic competition, cadets are encouraged to develop physical self-confidence and a general sense of well-being.
Leadership - Cadets are provided a distinct military structure that prepares them for personal responsibility, increasing opportunities for leadership, and responsible decision making competencies.

Strengths
VFMC is able to adhere to its values or cornerstones because of core strengths maintained by the institution since its founding, while other core strengths have been developed throughout Valley Forge’s 75-year history.

- A name recognized throughout the world
- An institution of learning which features a two-year military model college
- Signature programs serving diverse constituencies such as the service academy prep program, the Early Commissioning Program, and transfer students
- A qualified and committed faculty, staff and administration
- A low student-faculty ratio
- A dedicated network of alumni, parents and friends
- Dedication to the moral, ethical and physical development of the students
- The location in the historically and culturally rich environment the Main Line and metropolitan Philadelphia area
- The beauty of the campus
Section II

Institutional Challenges

While VFMC has an impressive set of values and strengths, we face current challenges:

- VFMC has a small endowment; alumni, foundation, and sponsored giving is inadequate. Most college graduates share their allegiance with their baccalaureate and post graduate programs. New funding sources must be identified, cultivated, and assessed.

- Facilities are being retrofitted to meet the challenging demands of the 21st century. This requires a focused fund-raising plan for growth and technology improvements.

- VFMC has created a co-educational, residential, associate degree granting transfer program for on site delivery. Building transfer articulation agreements provides visibility of the institution as a preferred provider of arts, science, and business administration degree completion applicants. Expansion of partnering agreements is required.

- The market for residential military associate degree granting colleges is challenged by low cost, funded opportunities at the community college level. Alternative audiences would benefit from academic programs with a military perspective. Research will help to define the feasibility of new audiences such as non-corps civilians full-time and/or part-time, veterans in a part-time evening/weekend delivery model, and active duty non-commissioned personnel and veterans in an online format.
  
  Substantive Change Proposal will be submitted to MSCHE in September 2010 following research into extending the mission to new audiences.

- Assessment data and analysis must inform planning and decision making and be used in resource allocation to promote institutional effectiveness.
Section III

Strategic Initiatives

► Realizing the Vision

A unified Valley Forge Military College community sets goals and measures outcomes for informed decision making and budget allocations. These goals and objectives are demonstrated in the six strategic initiatives:

1. Academic Excellence must be the strategic priority

2. Enhance the student enrollment experience through reinforcing the Five Cornerstones

3. Explore the possibility through research of extending the reach of the mission of Valley Forge Military College to include non-traditional audiences

4. Attract, retain, and reward faculty and staff who model academic and professional excellence

5. Identify appropriate facilities to sustain strategic initiatives

6. Identify and obtain the resources to support strategic initiatives
Section IV

Strategic Initiative #1

► Academic Excellence

1.1 **Assess policies and practices that support academic excellence**

   Admissions Criteria
   - Include both standardized test scores and grade point averages in scholarship decisions
   - Introduce an academic checklist to the admissions process for the purpose of verifying sufficient completion of language, English, science and math courses

1.2 **Identify the academic needs of cohorts of VFMC students:**

   - Early Commissioning Program (ECP)
   - Standardized Service Academies Prep Program
   - Civilian transfer students
   - Athletes with NCAA Requirement
   - All Transfer Students

1.3 **Enhance academic advising**

   - Ensure that academic advisors understand the developmental as well as academic needs of each of the College cohort groups
   - Designate a NACADA professional responsible for the coordination of academic advising functions
   - Ensure that academic advisors work closely with the Learning Assessment and Resource Center
   - Assess academic advising annually

1.4 **Learning Assessment and Support Center**

   - Actively pursue external funding to support an enhanced learning support system
   - Administer the Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes (SSHA) to all entering college students
   - Supervise online placement testing and post testing
   - Provide to faculty and appropriate professional staff the training necessary to design and monitor retention initiatives
   - Assess the experience and outcomes of students who utilize the Learning Assessment and Support Center

1.5 **Update the curriculum and programs based on assessment data**

   - A program evaluation process and timeline involving external reviewers will be implemented by Fall 2010
   - VFMC academic programs will be evaluated no less than every three years
1.6 Update of College Library Holdings and Database
- Develop a Library budget that will support growth of program delivery
- VFMC holdings shall support the College’s programs and shall be clearly delineated
- VFMC college cadets will have electronic access to the holdings of other colleges

1.7 Transfer Programs
- Transfer advisors will be responsible for monitoring the names of institutions to which students apply upon completion of the VFMC degree
- Valley Forge Military College will participate in the National Student Clearinghouse for the purpose of tracking student enrollments and verifying baccalaureate degrees earned
- No less than 70% of VFMC graduates who choose to continue their enrollment at a four year institution shall enroll at a moderately competitive, highly competitive, or most competitive institution as ranked by Peterson’s

1.8 Articulation Agreements
- VFMC will add no fewer than two articulation agreement with accredited colleges/universities each year for the next three years
- Existing articulation agreements will be updated regularly
- Articulation agreements to include course equivalencies will be posted on the VFMC website

1.9 Co-curricular Programs Identification and Assessment
- Participation rates and matriculation patterns of students as a function of co-curricular program shall be assessed annually
- New student surveys will include co-curricular interests

1.10 Other Operational Program Identification and Assessment
- Conduct an annual survey of key transfer institutions regarding preparedness of VFMC graduates
- Assess the academic success of students who complete the Service Academies Prep Program
- Track the career status of graduates of the Early Commissioning Program (ECP)
Enhance the Student Enrollment Experience through Reinforcing the Five Cornerstones

2.1 The First Cornerstone: Academic Excellence
   2.1.1 Introduce appropriate academic concentrations as needed
   2.1.2 Enhance departmental honors and awards including student memberships in national honor societies

2.2 The Second Cornerstone: Character Education
   2.2.1 Describe the role of Chapel Attendance
   2.2.2 Adhere to the Honor Code
   2.2.3 Expand Community Service
   2.2.4 Highlight leadership roles and training within tactical unit

2.3 The Third Cornerstone: Personal Motivation
   2.3.1 Promote Portfolio Development as an Assessment Tool
   2.3.2 Encourage volunteer service to VMFC
   2.3.3 Set tactical promotions and rank as a personal goal
   2.3.4 Participate in co-curricular programs such as peer mentoring and tutoring
   2.3.5 Maximize individual potential

2.4 The Fourth Cornerstone: Physical Conditioning
   2.4.1 Participate in varsity athletics
   2.4.2 Participate in club sports
   2.4.3 Build pride and spirit through the Plebe Crucible Event
   2.4.4 Demonstrate pride and precision in marching as One Corps
   2.4.5 Fulfill the physical training requirement

2.5 The Fifth Cornerstone: Leadership
   2.5.1 Demonstrate Cadet Corps leadership
   2.5.2 Fulfill ROTC leadership study requirements
   2.5.3 Participate in community service projects
   2.5.4 Give evidence of academic or other departmental service
   2.5.5 Strengthen student government
   2.5.6 Seek tactical leadership roles
Section IV

Strategic Initiative #3

Explore the Possibility of Extending VFMC Mission through Research and Market Analysis to Include New Audiences

3.1 Assess the Feasibility of Offering VFMC Programs to New Audiences

3.1.1 Conduct appropriate market research

3.1.2 Examine personnel, policies, processes to support new audiences

3.1.3 Consider offering VFMC associate degree programs to active duty, enlisted personnel and veterans around the world

3.1.4 Consider offering courses, certificates, and degree programs to civilian and other non-residential audiences

3.1.5 Promote faculty development in both online and alternative delivery of course material

3.1.6 Provide the required resources to support extending the reach of the Valley Forge Military College mission to new audiences
Attract, retain, and reward faculty and staff who model academic and professional excellence

4.1 Identify strategies to quantify academic and professional excellence
   4.1.1 Teaching
   4.1.2 Advising
   4.1.3 Volunteer Service
   4.1.5 Professional Service and Committee Work

4.2 Celebrate meritorious service
   4.2.1 Track data on professional development activity.
   4.2.2 Publish information in internal/external college media.
   4.2.3 Establish award/honor for meritorious service professionally and to the community.

4.3 Provide opportunity for professional development
   4.3.1 Partner with Teaching & Learning Centers at local colleges and universities for workshops, lectures, information discussions.
   4.3.2 Plan and implement professional development activities on campus to include informal and formal activities.
   4.3.3 Fund a budget line to support professional development activities to include guest lecturers

4.4 Encourage participation in external functions as a champion for a VFMC education
Section IV

Strategic Initiative #5

► Identify Appropriate Facilities to Sustain Strategic Directions

5.1 Assess the current use of facilities and structure the timeline for changes needed
   5.1.1 Technology
   5.1.2 Science, Math, and World Languages laboratories
   5.1.3 State-of-the-art learning areas in academic and residential settings
   5.1.4 Library renovations to include Learning Commons
   5.1.5 Gender appropriate facilities in every building
   5.1.6 Handicap accessibility
   5.1.7 Safety and Security

Section IV

Strategic Initiative #6

► Identify the Resources to Support Strategic Initiatives

6.1 Assess the current resources available to support the strategic plan
   6.1.1 Optimize philanthropic support for the living/learning environment
   6.1.2 Increase identification of grants to support academic programs including labs, library, professional development, student research, and exchange programs
   6.1.3 Use data to inform decision making and resource allocation
   6.1.4 Launch a capital campaign for new or renovated learning environments for Valley Forge Military College, The Military College of Pennsylvania™
**Conclusion**

**Strategic Plan 2010—2015** provides general direction and framework for sustaining a community of learners that prepares men and women for the duties and responsibilities of citizen leadership for the period 2010-2015. The plan requires setting goals, establishing metrics, and using assessment data to inform decision making for program development and resource allocation. This plan is also intended to become a document for institutional renewal.

These strategic initiatives require a dynamic institution capable of responding to changes in the internal and external environment. For example, Valley Forge Military College currently delivers to cadets in an academic and military residential environment on a single campus. Exploring the possibility through research and market analysis of extending the reach of the mission to include program delivery in alternative methods to new audiences is a strategic priority.

Valley Forge Military College will follow the guidelines provided by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education to comply with the standards required by the regional accrediting agency and the federal government.