

NOMINATION SIGNATURE PAGE

2021 Virginia Outstanding Faculty Awards

Please include this as the cover page of the nomination package PDF submission*

Name of Applicant:	Professor Tinni Sen
Institution:	Virginia Military Institute
Category:	Baccalaureate Institution
Signature of President or Chief Academic Officer:	
Printed Name of President or Chief Academic Officer:	BG Robert W. Moreschi
E-mail address of President or Chief Academic Officer:	moreschirw@vmi.edu
Telephone number of President or Chief Academic Officer:	540-464-7136

Mission Statement

Virginia Military Institute

Established by the Virginia General Assembly in 1839, The Virginia Military Institute is a four-year, wholly undergraduate, state-sponsored college whose student body is organized as a military corp.

The VMI Mission

Virginia Military Institute operates under the philosophy that the measure of a college lies in the quality and performance of its graduates and their contributions to society. Therefore, *it is the mission of the Virginia Military Institute* to produce educated, honorable men and women, prepared for the varied work of civil life, imbued with love of learning, confident in the functions and attitudes of leadership, possessing a high sense of public service, advocates of the American democracy and free enterprise system, and ready as citizen-soldiers to defend their country in time of national peril.

To accomplish this result, Virginia Military Institute shall provide to qualified young men and women undergraduate education of highest quality – embracing engineering, science, and the arts – conducted in and facilitated by the unique VMI system of military discipline.

Summary of Accomplishments

Professor Sen believes that “the measure of a college lies in the quality and performance of its graduates and their contributions to society” (VMI mission). She considers teaching to be at the heart of fulfilling that mission. Teaching allows her to integrate scholarship, academic mentorship, service to her profession and her community. Her **goals are to teach students how to think critically and compassionately, and to create an awareness and curiosity about the world around them.**

(i) TEACHING

Professor Sen’s careful attention to designing every lesson, varying the methods of delivery, and tying them into the larger theme of the course content and to the world at large, makes her an effective and beloved teacher. Her students and peers recognized her efforts in this regard by awarding her VMI’s two top teaching awards: the **Thomas Jefferson Award** in 2002 for her talent “at inspiring students in the development of their intellect and character,” and the **Distinguished Teaching Award**, in 2007 for “outstanding teaching and academic mentorship.”

Classroom Instruction

Economics can be a particularly challenging subject to teach because students often regard its lessons as abstract and irrelevant. **Professor Sen’s talent lies in her ability to engage her students so that they overcome these initial barriers, learning to apply basic economic concepts to address societal problems, and, by this means, develop a love for the discipline and compassion for the world.**

Students cite Professor Sen’s **passion for economics**, her **connections to her students**, her **capacity to explain complex ideas**, and her **ability to connect the subject to the world** at large as the attributes that make her an effective teacher. These comments are taken from her anonymous student evaluations:

“Confident, outspoken, genuine, sincere, knowledgeable, understanding, helpful, Col. Sen exemplifies all and more**Truly a phenomenal teacher**Passionate about economics**The simple explanation for complex topics** She asked a lot of questions throughout class and explained things in different ways**She actively engaged with students**Tying together lectures and homework**Class interaction and relevant assignments encouraged learning**How clearly she connects the material**The instructor is really smart and great at explaining things**I thought that the meetings were really effective as they allowed us to ask any questions we may have on a particular topic**The use of practical application for the course material helped**I really liked how we would go over in class the reading. It was nice to get exposure to the same stuff in a different manner**Lectures with real world applications**How engaging she made us all be**Your different sayings to help us remember an idea**Articles on 08 recession. Allowed us to use what we were learning and see how and why it’s important**I went in randomly with a question and it looked like she was pretty busy but she still took the time to answer my question and make sure I understood it**I didn’t do very well in the class, but I learned more than most of my other classes**Very interested in the topics and made us understand the topics**LTC Sen continues to be my favorite teacher. Why? Because she is an excellent lecturer, she love[s] the material we cover, she is fair, and more than anything else, she cares about the students she teaches**

8: What was particularly effective about this instructor’s teaching?

She walks on water



Professor Sen has taught numerous **courses in economics, including all the required introductory and upper level courses** in the VMI economics curriculum. In addition, she has taught International Finance, in which she refines and enhances her students’ talents in written

communication, and her favorite class, the **Economics of Poverty and Human Capability** in which she teaches students across the disciplines to think critically and compassionately about what constrains human capabilities, and what policies weaken, if not remove, barriers to human flourishing.

Student Development and Learning

Professor Sen views student development as a crucial part of teaching. Learning can begin in the classroom, but it develops fully beyond it. She therefore seeks opportunities to continue the learning process through undergraduate research, study abroad programs, mentoring student clubs and service learning.

Professor Sen **mentored her first undergraduate research** during **her first semester at VMI**. Since then, she has **mentored nine undergraduate projects**. She has a **joint publication in a peer-reviewed** journal with Cadet Will Gentry (Class of 2003), a rarity in economics. She and her cadets have been **awarded VMI's highly competitive Summer Fellowship for Undergraduate Research five times**.

Professor Sen considers VMI's mission to enhance a sense of public service a critical component of student development, she (with a colleague) **has served as the founding co-advisor** to Building BRIDGES, a student community service club. The club currently serves [Project Horizon](#) (the local resource center for targets of dating, sexual and domestic violence), [Rockbridge Habitat for Humanity](#), the local SPCA, [Rockbridge Area Relief Association](#) (provides local food and shelter support assistance), and local schools. In recognition of their efforts, they received the **Habitat's Helping Hand Award in 2017 and again in 2018**.

For her passion and dedication to student learning, VMI has appointed her their newest **Academic Director** for the [Shepherd Higher Education Consortium on Poverty](#).

(ii) DISCOVERY

The cornerstones of Professor Sen's scholarship are curiosity and collaboration. **She thrives in applying economic theory and economic tools to understand other fields of knowledge**. Her research expertise spans several fields, including law and economics, the use of machine learning to understand the economics of conflict and growth, and using game theory to understand the effectiveness of different teaching methods.

Professor Sen's more recent work has resulted in [two co-authored books](#) and a book contract: ***New Machine Learning Tools for Predicting Economic Growth: A Guide for Theory and Policy***, (Roman and Littlefield). While machine learning itself is not a new idea, she has made a **novel contribution to the field**, predicting growth and conflict by starting with an agnostic model. These works are **particularly notable** since economists predominantly publish in peer-reviewed journals, with only the most accomplished economic scholars publishing books.

Professor Sen's scholarship is intrinsically tied to her teaching. The breadth of her research means that she brings substantive and inter-disciplinary insights into her classes, as found in her co-authored article, "**When Good Little Debts Went Bad: An Empirical Study of Small Claims Litigation on the Virginia Frontier, 1745-1755**," published in the *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, **a top-tier journal published by MIT press**. The cross-pollination of historical and economic insights from this study in its contribution to furthering the understanding of debt litigation in the dawn of American capitalism is particularly relevant for cadets being schooled in a liberal arts education.

Professor Sen (and a colleague) was awarded an **\$85000 VMI Teaching grant** to develop and pilot the **Mindfulness Training for Resilient Leaders** curriculum (fall 2020). This fully cross-disciplinary curriculum is based on current evidence from neurological studies which recognizes that through mindfulness practice, students improve concentration, increase resilience, and learn to attenuate the effects of stress. With this program, she is introducing holistic learning to her students.

Professor Sen has received **two Jackson Hope Faculty Development Leave Awards**. At VMI, such “sabbaticals” are selective and competitive. Further, she received **four** Grants-in-Aid-of-Research, **two** Teaching in Technology-in-Grants, and **two** Faculty Development Awards.

(iii) INTEGRATION OF KNOWLEDGE

Professor Sen’s embraces VMI’s philosophy of an interdisciplinary curriculum that promotes a wider knowledge of the world through exposure to culture and (social) science, to learn social responsibility, as well as to learn effective analytical, critical-thinking and communication skills. To that end, she **collaborates with scholars from many different fields, teaches** introductory economics classes to non-majors, and **has designed study abroad programs**.

Professor Sen **looks for every opportunity to enhance her** students’ education through extra-curricular experiences. In 2014, Lexington’s Project Horizon **asked Professor Sen’s help to provide** basic financial literacy to their clients. She (with colleagues) **convened a cross collaboration between VMI cadets and** (neighboring) **Washington and Lee University students**. The result was a customized series of presentations and modules that Project Horizon can now use for their clients. More to the point, **Professor Sen created a way for her students to apply their knowledge and learn from their service, as well as from the perspectives of survivors of trauma, all in collaboration with students from a different university**.

Professor Sen has been **part of two study abroad programs**. Both **involved students and colleagues from across disciplines**. She views such programs as extraordinarily important to **synthesizing the student’s educational experience**, especially given VMI’s mission of producing world leaders. Students who directly experience other cultures, and other political and economic systems, **learn to be more effective global leaders**. In Spring 2003, she and a colleague took **22 cadets for a six-day tour of Prague** and surrounding towns. In summer 2019, she **developed and deployed a second study abroad class**, “The Economics of the European Union,” travelling with colleagues and 12 students for 23 days, lecturing and visiting, for example, the European Central Bank as well as the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site.

For her dedicated efforts at **championing VMI’s three-legged stool** of excellence in academics, military life, and athletics, Professor Sen was **named the Alexander P. Morrison 1939 Professor of Economics and Business** in 2018.

(iv) SERVICE

Professor Sen’s experiences as an immigrant, a person of color, a teacher, an economist, and a member of the VMI community makes her eager to serve her community.

Professor Sen currently **serves as faculty co-advisor** to VMI’s Promaji club, a student club dedicated to supporting and advocating for **cadets of color**. The current national reckoning with

racial justice and the fact that VMI is a southern college, situated in a town that was home to two generals of the confederacy, has put a spotlight on this club. Prof. Sen remains mindful of the need to **listen to the voices of her cadets**, advocate for their rights, and have their welfare be at the heart of it all. As a person of color herself, she is deeply grateful to be **advancing racial justice** on behalf of her students and her school.

Professor Sen **serves as a mentor to two of her junior colleagues**, 2019 OFA winner Dr. Valentina Dimitrova-Grajzl and Dr. Jennifer Gerow. In their words, “Tinni is an exceptional mentor. . . [Recognizing] I needed help before I knew it” (Gerow), and “I attribute . . . my success at VMI to Dr. Sen’s wise advice” (Dimitrova-Grajzl). Professor Sen has a reputation for **interdisciplinary service. Colleagues from other departments regularly ask her to mentor junior faculty** in an informal capacity.

Service to her department

Professor Sen **serves** her Economics and Business (ECBU) department by **chairing** and **participating** in several committees. She **chairs** the AACSB Writing Committee, Participants Committee and the ECBU Scholarships committee, managing annual proceeds from a six-figure endowment. **She serves** on the ECBU curriculum committee. She **was instrumental in creating** the Watjen Economics and Business Leadership Development Program (WELD) stemming from a \$2 million gift to the department in 2019. She now **chairs** the WELD Study Abroad Committees, managing 40% of the WELD budget.

Service to her University

Professor Sen has served, at the request of the VMI Dean of Faculty, on several Institute committees. She views such service as the best way to interact with colleagues across academic and non-academic disciplines, sharing in their efforts to **launch and lead initiatives**, and **solve shared problems**. The Dean of Faculty recognized her dedication to academic principles and her understanding of VMI’s special role as a senior military college by **appointing her Co-Chair of VMI’s Faculty Handbook Committee**, a committee charged with the first extensive revision to the handbook in sixteen years.

Service to her Profession

Professor Sen contributes in many capacities to her profession. She **serves** as a **reviewer** for the National Science Foundation, the *Southern Economic Journal*, and the *Virginia Social Science Journal*. She regularly chairs, organizes, and serves as a discussant, at sessions at the Southern Economic Association meetings. She was editor and co-editor of the *Virginia Social Science Journal* and was treasurer for the Virginia Social Science Association.

Service to her community

Professor Sen’s **dedication** to her community was recognized in 2019 by **Washington and Lee University’s James G. Leyburn Award**. This is the **highest service award** by that school’s ODK chapter to a member of the local community who **“provides exemplary service.”** In the community, Professor Sen is a **founder** and **on the board** of 50 Ways-Rockbridge, and she **chairs** that organization’s **Racial Justice Issues Group**. She was responsible for **reestablishing** the Rockbridge County NAACP chapter after a 20-year hiatus. She is **chair** of the NAACP Membership Committee and **serves** on its Political Action Committee. In addition, Professor Sen **is on the board of the** Rockbridge Regional Library Foundation board, is **President** of the local high school’s Parent Teacher Student Association, and has served in various **leadership positions** on school PTAs and local organizations.

Personal Statement

We all have a story that gives us purpose, a story around which we organize our lives. I have spent most of my life thinking about how we learn, why we learn, what facilitates learning, what impedes it, and how it can be used to increase shared progress. It has been my life's experience that the secret to learning lies in compassion, curiosity and engagement: exposure to new ways of thinking, entertaining different perspectives, and debating ideas. It is my life's goal to share this lesson. So that of the many different ways I have been introduced to an audience—professor, educator, scholar, instructor—I prefer to describe myself, first and foremost, as a teacher.

My earliest memory of being dimly aware of how the teacher really matters was standing amidst the chatter of a kindergarten classroom, in a sea of Caucasian girls and boys, and not understanding a word of what was being said. I was five years old, and had moved with my family, from rural West Bengal, India, to newly-independent Zambia, a country in southern Africa, and I did not speak any English. The carpool dropped me off inexorably every day, and every day, the teacher left me to myself. It was outside his experience, communicating with a kid who either didn't say anything, or when she did, spoke in a forked tongue.

My father knew what learning was about. A physicist by training but a teacher by reputation, he wanted me to learn from this new culture, but not forget my own. So, he gave me storybooks to read, children's books by famous Bengali authors. Reading these books, I skipped the words that were too hard in a rush to know what happened next. Meanwhile, in the classroom, Dick and Jane spent their time doing things that were incomprehensible at first and uninteresting later. I eventually learned to speak and read and write English well, and then had to relearn the intricacies of Bangla grammar when we returned to India, but the stark contrast of these two models of learning remains with me.

Fast forward to 1992, when I moved from Kolkata, India, a city of millions, to small town Oxford, Mississippi, and the university there. Talk about culture shock: where were the skyscrapers and the gritty urban life of the movies? The academic culture was alien as well. In Kolkata, I learned through discipline: repetition, rigorous practice, and no-questions-asked memorization (literally). In Mississippi, my professors, schooled in the American liberal arts education, taught me to question, to think, to analyze, to connect, to see what mattered—not just to my own education, but to the world at large. The American model of teaching and learning, at its best, forges connections to literature, to science, to society, and to the American fabric. When I emerged with my PhD in economics, I knew I had found my place. I belonged in academia, as a social scientist, and I belonged in America. And I wanted to take this model of learning into a classroom.

I also fell in love with Economics (now there's a sentence you don't hear often!). Back when I was in Kolkata, my high school economics teacher had understood well what facilitated learning. She took us beyond supply and demand, opening our eyes to the power of economics as a tool for furthering social justice. In Mississippi, I saw the stark contrast between rich, white, small-town Oxford, ringed by rural, mostly black, poverty. Granted, economists often shy away from normative questions of fairness. But one need not take that path. After all, the "first" economist, Adam Smith said, "However selfish man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness

necessary to him.” How can one address issues of income inequality, and their role in voluntary exchange, without bringing to these considerations the full weight of economic analyses?

So here I was, fresh out of graduate school hoping to bring these lessons to my classes and my profession, and, as trite as it seems, to my community and country. I came to the Virginia Military Institute in 2001. I did not have a military background, and I did not know anyone who did. In fact, the US military was quite outside of any of my experiences. Another culture to adjust to, I thought. But, now I knew what I was doing.

At VMI, I found a group of students contending with familiar problems: some as clueless about college as my five-year-old self, some struggling to fit in, some with the thirst to learn but not knowing how, and others who thought they knew what they were doing, but did not understand why it mattered. I understood them. After all, I was intimately acquainted with learning in different cultures, the missteps and the mistakes. I also understood their desire to seek out a larger purpose. Our cadets want to make a difference and to serve their country and the world, whether by commissioning in the United States armed forces or forging a path in civilian life. They are, it turns out, my kind of people. It remains a pleasure, and in fact, a calling, to fulfill VMI’s mission of educating men and women to become citizen-soldiers.

VMI’s system of education interweaves three cultures: academic, military and athletic. Exams, and papers, parades and rigorous physical training—every minute of the cadet’s time is scheduled. It seemed that my life’s experience had prepared me for this job: I had the benefit of knowing how to bridge diverse social cultures, and I knew how crucial the learning model was to that process. My experiences, from the lack of empathy of my kindergarten teacher, to the engaged wisdom of my father, to the connections that I had learned to make in graduate school, shaped my certainty that learning is best achieved if the teacher brings compassion, connection, and engagement to the process. I can foresee the struggles that my students might face as they navigate these diverse paradigms and I have the experiences to guide them.

My approach to teaching at VMI is to treat my students with compassion and understanding as they adjust to this new culture, thereby creating an environment hospitable to learning. I forge connections through class lectures and by other means, such as assigning pieces of literature. What better for way for my students to understand the role and importance of economic policy in people’s lives than reading, for example, Steinbeck, and his accounts of individuals living through the Great Depression? Economics is no longer a collection of abstract concepts in a textbook, but a mechanism to better the lives of real people. I hope to model academic rigor and a concern for others, and my goal is for students to carry this model with them as they make their mark on the world.

So here I am, nineteen years into my career. I have learned much. But the core lesson is still the same: that learning thrives in an atmosphere of tolerance and kindness, and it is only when students are engaged and forge connections across disciplines and experiences that they really learn. I know the frustrations of learning in this way—it is messy and “non-linear,” but I am the beneficiary of its bountiful rewards. Therefore, this is my “teaching model.” It is this lesson that fuels my passion for teaching, and it is this lesson that makes me the teacher that I am.

**Abbreviated Curriculum Vitae
Tinni Sen, Ph. D.**

Education

Ph.D. in Economics, University of Mississippi, May, 1999
MSc. in Economics, Calcutta University, Calcutta, India. May 1992
BSc. in Economics, Lady Brabourne College, Calcutta University, Calcutta, India, May 1989
Major: Economics; Minors: Statistics and English.

Experience

Professor of Economics,
Department of Economics and Business, Virginia Military Institute 2011- present
Associate Professor of Economics,
Department of Economics and Business, Virginia Military Institute, 2007 – 2011
Assistant Professor of Economics
Department of Economics and Business, Virginia Military Institute, 2001 – 2007.

Teaching

The Economics of Human Capability (Honors Seminar)
The Economics and Politics of the EU (Study Abroad Class)
International Finance (Writing intensive), Intermediate Macroeconomics
Intermediate Microeconomics, Principles of Microeconomics
Principles of Macroeconomics, Statistics
Managerial Economics, Business Finance.

Scholarship

Books

[*Machine Learning Techniques in Economics: New Tools for Predicting Economic Growth*](#), with Atin Basuchoudhary and Jim Bang, Springer Briefs, 2017.
[*Predicting Hotspots: Using Machine Learning to Understand Civil Conflict*](#), with Atin Basuchoudhary, Jim Bang and John David, Rowman and Littlefield, 2018.

Peer-Reviewed Articles

“When Good Little Debts Went Bad: An Empirical Study of Small Claims Litigation on the Virginia Frontier, 1745-1755,” with Turk McCleskey and Atin Basuchoudhary. *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*. January 2015.
“Finding Mixed Strategy Nash Equilibria with Decision Trees,” with Barry Cobb. *International Review of Economics Education*. January 2014.
“Asymmetric Business Cycles under Optimal Mixed State and Time Dependent Pricing Rules,” with John R. Conlon. *Berkeley Electronic Macroeconomic Journal*. Fall 2010.
“US Aid and HDI,” with Atin Basuchoudhary. *Journal of Scottish Church College*. Invited paper (subjected to editorial review). Spring 2006.
“US Aid or US Trade? – Relative Effect on Worldwide Human Development,” with Atin Basuchoudhary. *Proceedings of the 2006 International Business and Economics Research Conference*. Fall 2006.
“Is the VMI Fitness Test Still an Adequate Measure of Fitness: An Empirical Investigation,” with Will Gentry. *The Virginia Social Science Journal*. Spring 2006.
“Impact of Employee Reaction and Turnover Rates on the Successful Implementation of an Information System: A Game Theory Approach.” *The Review of Business Information Systems*. Fall 2005.
“International Support for U.S. Foreign Policy: The Role of Foreign Aid, Trade Integration and Social Development,” with Atin Basuchoudhary and Ed Sexton. *International Business and Economics Research Journal*. June 2004.

“Financial Data as Predictors of Firm Failure—A Look Thirty Years Later,” with Karen Gutermuth, H. Francis Bush and Trevor Chesler. *The Virginia Economic Journal*. Fall 2003.

Selected Working Papers

“Identifying the Complex Causes of Civil War - A Machine Learning Approach,” with Atin Basuchoudhary, Jim Bang, and John David. Book Contract with Palgrave Publishers.
“An Empirical Study of Small Claims Litigation in York County, Virginia, 1746-1755,” with Atin Basuchoudhary and Turk McCleskey.

Selected Undergraduate Research Projects

“Spending Money Can’t Always Save Lives: The Effects on the Economy and Healthcare in Japan, United States, and Norway,” Trey Rose, spring 2016.
“Growth in Haiti through the Right Incentives,” Nathanael Salatin. Institute Honors Thesis, spring 2011.

Selected Academic and Public Service

Faculty Advisor, Promaji Club, VMI’s **Club for Cadets of Color**, present
Academic Director, Shepherd Higher Education Consortium on Poverty, present
Chair, ECBU WELD Study Abroad Scholarship Committees, 2019-present
Faculty Advisor Building Bridges Cadet Service club, 2015-2019
Chair, session organizer, discussant, Southern Economic Association, 2006 -present
Editor, Virginia Social Science Journal, 2010-2012
Chair, Committee on Academic Advising and Support, 2016-2018
President, Rockbridge County High School PTSA, present
Chair, Membership Committee Rockbridge County NAACP. 2019 - present
Member, Political Action Committee, Rockbridge County NAACP. 2018 - present
Board Member, Foundation Board of Rockbridge Regional Library. 2018 - present
Founder and Board Member 50-Ways Rockbridge. 2016 – present
Treasurer, Foundation Board of Rockbridge Regional Library. 2015-2018.

Selected Awards and Grants

JH New Directions in Teaching and Research Grant, Fall 2020
for **developing and piloting** “*Mindfulness Training for Resilient Leaders (MTRL)*”
Curriculum at VMI (with co-PI). \$85,000 grant
Finalist, SCHEV’S Outstanding Faculty Award, 2020
Leyburn Award for Exemplary Service to the Community, 2019
awarded by Washington and Lee University’s Circle of Omicron Delta Kappa
Alexander P. Morrison Chair in Economics, 2018
VMI Distinguished Teaching Award, 2008
“for outstanding teaching and academic mentorship”
Jackson Faculty Development Leave, 2015, 2017
Jackson-Hope Summer Research Fellow, 2004, 2005, 2007
Thomas Jefferson Teaching Award, 2001
“for inspiring students in the development of their intellect and character.”

Letters of Support (Excerpted)

My colleague for over 18 years, Tinni is a beloved teacher, known for her rigor and “tough” grading. Tinni’s courses are routinely oversubscribed, as students flock to her courses because of her patience, fairness, and helpfulness. Passionate about economics and communication, she drives students to improve their written and oral communication. Inquisitive and prodigious, she has an outstanding scholarship record, including two recently published books, one on the economic analysis of civil conflict and another on machine learning and economic growth....[F]or those without voice in need of encouragement, there is no greater voice than Tinni’s. **Brig. Gen. Robert Moreschi, Ph.D., VMI Deputy Superintendent for Academics and Dean of Faculty, former Head, VMI Department of Economics and Business (2013-2018).**

I have known Prof. Tinni Sen since 2001, first as her Dean of the Faculty at the Virginia Military Institute and later from 2009-2016 as a tenured professor and colleague of hers in a neighboring academic department. An amalgam of excellence in so many dimensions, Tinni is a truly special college professor, one of the top four or five most talented I have known in over thirty years of service in higher education. Indeed, I have known few others who have more successfully balanced a fervent and demonstrated commitment to teaching excellence and student development, a productive, cross-disciplinary research agenda that informs classroom efforts, and important service to college and discipline. That capacity for balanced excellence is one of her most distinctive characteristics. At VMI, cadets are drawn to Tinni like a magnet, attracted by her brilliance, accessibility, and uncanny ability to stretch them to full potential. . . Make no mistake—Tinni Sen is the stuff of which great colleges are made. **Charles F. Brower IV, Brigadier General, USA (Retired) Dean and Professor Emeritus, VMI.**

Dr. Sen is an extraordinary teacher, productive scholar and selfless professional. She is one of the most popular teachers in the department. Her student evaluations of teaching regularly speak to her engagement, enthusiasm, and commitment to student learning. Dr. Sen has worked with fellow economists on many projects but also with colleagues in VMI’s History and Physical Education Departments. Dr. Sen’s service to ECBU, VMI, and the local community has been extraordinary. She was recognized for her community leadership and service by the James G. Leyburn Award from Washington and Lee University’s ODK chapter. **Prof. Clifford West, Ph.D., Head, VMI Department of Economics and Business.**

I have long thought of Dr. Sen as an “outstanding” faculty member. . . I have walked into a Munich hotel lobby to find her encircled by cadets, spurred into extemporaneous discussions by her earlier classroom lessons. I have read her novel article on economic history, an exemplary piece of interdisciplinary scholarship. I have worked with her on committees that she has chaired with an authoritative, but patient, hand. In all of these endeavors, Dr. Sen provides us a role model of intellectual dexterity, compassion for others, and dedication to her craft — cardinal attributes to which we all aspire as educators at VMI. **Prof. Howard Sanborn, Ph.D., Fulbright Scholar, VMI Department of International Studies & Political Science.**

There is no one more deserving of the OFA than Prof. Tinni Sen. She is a professor whose heart and soul is invested in her cadets, she teaches with keen purpose not only to enlighten but to unleash and imbue student potential with humane and ethical content. She does this not through preaching but through example. Observing and interacting with COL Sen outside her already superb classroom lectures is to observe and interact with genuine kindness . . . [that] is the stuff of outstanding professorship. I know all this because I was subject to her kindness and

mentorship both as a cadet and an Alumnus, a kindness and mentorship that up to today, ten years after graduation, shows no signs of exhaustion and continues to fuel my curiosity and growth. **Hisham Yousif, CPT, AR Commanding C Troop 1/11 ACR, VMI Class of 2010.**

Col. Tinni Sen is the single most influential professor I have had in my academic career. Her influence in my life is centered on three pillars: caring for me personally, challenging me academically, and coaching me to find a career path. . . I specifically remember Col. Sen calling me to her office several times telling me that my performance was unacceptable and that she knew I was capable of more. She had a relentless desire to not let me accept anything less than my best. Her deep knowledge of who I was allowed her to ultimately guide me into a career that has shaped my life in ways she'll never know. **Richard Luck, VMI Class of 2012.**

Despite my best efforts to avoid classes with any math, I found myself in the ECBU department fulfilling the Economics requirement of my major. As the only woman in my class, studying a subject that brought me a great amount of anxiety, I anticipated nothing positive from the semester. That was until, COL Sen entered the classroom. COL Sen fosters a learning environment that is hospitable to students of all backgrounds, levels, and learning styles. . . She attends to individual students, genuinely caring about their success, and is a resource and ally to students even after they have left her classroom. **Quinn Conrad, VMI Class of 2019.**

Tinni Sen has demonstrated her love and concern for the issues of the day in her community and beyond with profound dedication and compassion. . . Dr. Sen recognized the need for a NAACP Chapter and was determined to see that it was organized. . . As a result, the Rockbridge County NAACP has been active since April 2018. She serves on its Political Action and Membership Committees with enthusiasm and zeal. To say that she is an asset to her community is an understatement. She has been an agent for change in the Lexington and Rockbridge community. **Reginald A. Early, President, Rockbridge County NAACP.**

I have had the pleasure of serving the community alongside [Dr. Sen] in numerous projects centered on social justice and can attest to her dedication. . . As an immigrant myself, I am thankful for her dedication to this community and her desire to help others. I am privileged to say that her hard work and influence have inspired me to help other immigrants in this community to the fullest extent of my abilities. **Fiorela Lewis, Underserved Outreach Coordinator, Project Horizon.**

As a founding member of 50 Ways-Rockbridge, Professor Sen has contributed day after day to constructing a welcoming local community that addresses areas of uneven distribution of resources. . . She is a joyful force to be reckoned with, as she pulls more than her own weight and subtly and kindly pushes others to do the same. Tinni has chaired the Racial Justice Issues Group of 50 Ways for four years. Under her leadership, the group has helped to regenerate the Rockbridge NAACP, fomented great interest in the Coming to the Table community group to forge better race relations, sponsored talks by leading local and regional experts on African-American history and current events in our area, and collaborated on a race education program for all middle-school students. Tinni's great humanity manifests itself not only in the many profound community contributions she has made, but also in the secret acts of generosity she practices daily. This talented professor and researcher at every turn lends her top-notch intelligence, organizational know-how, and supreme kindness to the people of our area. **Prof. Ellen Mayock, Ph.D., Ernest Williams II Professor of Spanish, Washington and Lee University, 2010 OFA winner.**