



St. Mary's College of Maryland
at Historic St. Mary's City

Alumni Chapter Handbook

Introductory Letter

Alumni Chapter Presidents and Committee Members,

On behalf of the St. Mary's College of Maryland Alumni Council, thank you for your service to your alma mater and to your alumni chapter. Alumni chapters are formed primarily because alumni have a fondness for St. Mary's College of Maryland. Alumni also enjoy getting to know other alumni within their community and sharing their experiences and the great St. Mary's College of Maryland tradition.

Official alumni chapter affiliation with the Alumni Association comes with many advantages and privileges. This small handbook will help you to better understand our expectations and guide you through the process of starting and maintaining a successful alumni chapter. Again, we thank you for your commitment and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Dave Sushinsky '02
Director of Alumni Relations

Paul Schultheis '98
President of the Alumni Association

Alumni Chapters and Benefits

Alumni chapter development is an essential element in helping the Office of Alumni Relations build and maintain relationships with alumni and friends of St. Mary's College of Maryland. These chapters provide alumni with the opportunity for professional and social interaction, and volunteer opportunities that benefit both the College and the individual. Through alumni chapters, graduates from St. Mary's are able to maintain and develop friendships and associations with other alumni, participate in the ongoing progress and life of the College, and continue to nurture the important education-for-life experience.

There are three types of alumni chapters:

- **Geographic Chapters** are for alumni and friends of St. Mary's College of Maryland in a specific region (Baltimore Metro Area, Southern Maryland, New England, etc.).
- **Affinity Chapters** bring together alumni and friends with a shared common attribute or activity (black alumni, athletic alumni, law alumni, etc.).
- **Academic Chapters** are comprised of alumni and friends who graduated from a specific academic discipline (music, biology, history, etc.).

Alumni chapters benefit the school, the alumni, and members of the greater St. Mary's College of Maryland community by:

- Creating ways for alumni to network and meet each other in their communities.
- Planning and hosting events that strengthen alumni ties to the College.
- Renewing friendships developed at the College.
- Supporting the efforts of the college to keep alumni informed of campus developments.
- Providing avenues for the exchange of ideas between alumni and the College.
- Assisting the College's recruitment and admissions program.
- Involving alumni in career development, and job and internship placement of students and graduates.

Process of Developing Alumni Chapters

Concentrations of alumni are spread throughout the United States and around the world. In some cases, the Office of Alumni Relations may identify groups of alumni in certain areas that would benefit from an organized alumni chapter. In other situations, alumni may approach the Office of Alumni Relations with the intention of creating a chapter.

These steps need to be taken to formalize your alumni chapter.

1. For geographic alumni chapters, the first step is defining the region's boundaries. For affinity and academic chapters, the uniting interest must be identified.
2. The second step is to publish an appeal to alumni in that defined region or affinity to serve on the chapter committee. Diversity in this core group ensures event participation from a broader-based alumni body.
3. The third step is to identify a president or co-presidents, most likely a member or members that responded to the call to be on the chapter committee. The selection of the president is not formal and he or she will normally self-identify or be selected by the alumni director and president of the Alumni Council.
4. Next, a *petition for charter (example on page 10)*, with no fewer than 15 member signatures, is submitted by the chapter committee to the executive committee of the Alumni Council for approval.
5. Upon approval by the alumni director and the executive committee of the Alumni Council, chapter recognition will be granted.
6. Once chartered, the chapter committee, under the leadership of the chapter president, should set chapter goals. Each chapter shall plan their goals with the assistance of the alumni director.
7. To maintain the status of a chapter, all guidelines within this handbook must be addressed and followed or the chapter may be dissolved by the Alumni Council.

Chapter Organization – President

Each alumni chapter will have a chapter committee led by a chapter president. The president works hand-in-glove with the alumni director and he or she will act as the liaison between the alumni chapter and the Alumni Council. There is no term limit for a chapter president provided he or she is actively involved and fulfilling the duties as outlined in this handbook.

The chapter president is responsible for:

- Providing overall leadership and direction.
- Working with the Office of Alumni Relations to identify and recruit volunteers to serve on the chapter committee.
- Organizing at least one annual strategic planning meeting with the chapter committee members in the fall or early winter to discuss event ideas for the year ahead.
- Coordinating all chapter events with the Office of Alumni Relations.
- Ensuring that the alumni chapter holds, at minimum, one signature event per year.
- Attending as many chapter events as possible, especially the annual signature event.
- Delegating specific event planning responsibilities to chapter committee members and following up to ensure that tasks are being accomplished in a timely manner.
- Confirming that all chapter activities and initiatives are approved by the Office of Alumni Relations including, but not limited to, events, programs, and newsletters.
- Allowing the Office of Alumni Relations to publish pre-approved personal contact information on the alumni website.
- Submitting chapter reports to the secretary of the Alumni Council prior to Alumni Council quarterly meetings.
- Attending the Alumni Council quarterly meetings, especially the annual retreat, when possible. Attendance is not mandatory, but highly encouraged.
- Ensuring that that the chapter remains active by fulfilling all requirements as defined in this handbook.

Chapter Organization – Chapter Committee

The chapter committee should ideally have a minimum of three members and be comprised of alumni from various ages, interests, and backgrounds. This committee will support the chapter president in the planning and execution of alumni chapter activities and initiatives. Committee member responsibilities range from providing event ideas during the annual strategic planning meeting to taking the lead as an event coordinator for chapter events. The level of involvement will depend on the interest and availability of the volunteers. There is no term limit for chapter committee members as long as they are actively involved and fulfilling the duties outlined in this handbook.

The chapter committee volunteers are responsible for:

- Attending the annual fall or winter strategic planning meeting organized by the chapter president.
- Assisting the chapter president with the identification and recruitment of other committee members.
- Providing educational, social, and/or service-oriented event ideas to the chapter president.
- Attending as many chapter events as possible, especially the annual signature event.
- Responding to specific requests from the chapter president for assistance in creating, promoting, and executing chapter events and initiatives.
- Educating alumni and friends within the chapter about events and encouraging attendance.
- Using personal communication tools such as social media, email, and phone to contact other alumni and friends about chapter initiatives and events.
- Allowing the Office of Alumni Relations to publish pre-approved personal contact information on the alumni website.
- Supporting the efforts of the College to keep alumni informed on campus developments.
- Serving as an ambassador of St. Mary's College of Maryland.

Alumni Chapter Policies and Benefits

Once officially recognized as an alumni chapter of the St. Mary's College of Maryland Alumni Association, chapters must adhere to the following:

1. All promotional materials bearing the chapter's name (brochures, invitations, clothing, etc.) must be approved by the alumni director.
2. Any written or published materials, including information posted on the alumni website or on any online resource affiliated with the College (Facebook page, LinkedIn group, etc.), must first be approved by the alumni director.
3. Any event or initiative with an associated cost must be approved by the alumni director. In some cases, the chapter may receive funding assistance from the Office of Alumni Relations.

Once officially recognized as an alumni chapter of the St. Mary's College of Maryland Alumni Association, chapters are provided with the following:

1. Office of Alumni Relations staff assistance in planning and implementation of approved and scheduled events.
2. Office of Alumni Relations staff assistance in producing and mailing chapter materials, including event advertising.
3. Office of Alumni Relations staff assistance in collecting chapter event reservation information and associated fees.
4. Inclusion in St. Mary's College of Maryland Alumni Association publications, both print and online.
5. Access to pre-approved office resources such as our online social media outlets, conference call technology, etc.
6. Event funding support, in some cases. When possible, the Office of Alumni Relations will help financially support alumni chapters. As a rule, however, chapter events should be planned to break even or be profitable.
7. Approved distribution lists of alumni relevant to your chapter, when necessary. **All records are confidential and are not to be used for any commercial purpose or personal gain.**

Alumni Chapter Maintenance Requirements

In order to maintain good standing as an active chapter of the St. Mary's College of Maryland Alumni Association, all recognized chapters must adhere to the following:

- Leadership: Following the selection of a new president or change in committee membership, the group must report changes to the alumni director.
- Events: Each chapter shall hold a minimum of one signature event per year. Prior to scheduling any event, the president should contact the Office of Alumni Relations to coordinate the proposed date with other alumni activities on the alumni calendar. All events shall be held in a manner consistent with the overall goals and objectives of St. Mary's College of Maryland and the Alumni Association.
- Annual Review and Renewal: Regardless of the original recognition date, all chapters will come up for review by the executive committee of the Alumni Council at the beginning of the fiscal year (July 1). Should a chapter be unable to adhere to the chapter maintenance requirements, the executive committee may take steps to initiate the chapter suspension/dissolution process.
- Legal Relationships: Alumni chapters are recognized entities of the St. Mary's College of Maryland Alumni Association. The Alumni Association operates under the auspices of St. Mary's College of Maryland, and is subject to the authority thereof.
- Contracts and Agreements: Any contract(s) must be entered under the authorization of the alumni director of St. Mary's College of Maryland. Questions concerning these matters should be directed to the alumni director.
- Product Licensing/St. Mary's College of Maryland Logos: All use of the St. Mary's College of Maryland seal and logos must be approved by the alumni director.
- Chapter Reimbursement/ Payment Criteria: Monies spent by a chapter for an event or meeting must be approved by the alumni director in advance, prior to expenditure. In order to be reimbursed, receipt(s) for the expenditure(s) must be submitted to the Office of Alumni Relations within 30 days of the event.

Chapter or Club Suspension and Dissolution

The Office of Alumni Relations, Alumni Council, its executive committee and the St. Mary's College of Maryland Alumni Association are committed to assisting all recognized Chapters to be viable and successful. Unfortunately, when chapters are unable to meet the minimum maintenance requirements, they may face suspension or dissolution. The following describes the circumstances and procedures that apply when this situation becomes necessary.

- Suspension and Dissolution by the Chapter: A chapter may be suspended if there is no longer an interest or ability by the leadership or its committee members to maintain the chapter. The executive committee of the Alumni Council will acknowledge the suspension when it receives notification from the chapter president of such situation. The executive committee shall then promptly inform the Alumni Council of the chapter's suspension status.

If after one year from the date of suspension the chapter has not been reactivated, then the chapter may be dissolved by majority vote of the Alumni Council or executive committee.

- Suspension/Dissolution Process: The executive committee may suspend a chapter if it fails to meet the maintenance requirements as previously outlined. When suspension or dissolution becomes necessary, the following due process will be followed:
 1. A written notification of suspension will be sent to the chapter president by the president of the Alumni Council. This notification shall include a request to participate in a meeting between the executive committee and chapter leadership to discuss the status and/or possible alternatives for the continued viability of the chapter. If an in-person meeting is not possible, then an alternative communication method should be worked out between the executive committee and the chapter leadership.
 2. Depending on the outcome of this meeting, the executive committee will make a recommendation regarding the chapter's ongoing status (continuance, suspension, or dissolution) to the Alumni Council.
 3. If, after one year from the date of suspension, the chapter is not reactivated, then the chapter may be dissolved by the majority vote of the Alumni Council or executive committee.

St. Mary's College of Maryland

(Chapter Name)

Sample

Petition for Charter

Sample

(date)

The undersigned alumni of St. Mary's College of Maryland petition the Alumni Council, the governing body of the Alumni Association, for a chapter charter. The approved charter would officially recognize the (Chapter Name), grant it the authority and responsibility to operate as a branch of the Alumni Association, and allow its president to represent the chapter as a non-voting member of the Alumni Council.

(If a Regional Chapter)

The (Chapter Name) shall include all alumni residing in (name specific counties or states), or any St. Mary's alumna/us who desires to become a member of the chapter.

(If an Affinity or Academic Chapter)

The (Chapter Name) shall include all alumni that identify with (name affinity or discipline), or any St. Mary's alumna/us who desires to become a member of the chapter.

The primary objectives of the (Chapter Name) will be to organize social, service, recreational, and educational programs and activities that bring together alumni, parents, and friends of St. Mary's College of Maryland, and to promote the advancement of the college.

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| 1. _____ | 9. _____ | 17. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 10. _____ | 18. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 11. _____ | 19. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 12. _____ | 20. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 13. _____ | 21. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 14. _____ | 22. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 15. _____ | 23. _____ |
| 8. _____ | 16. _____ | 24. _____ |

**minimum of 15 signatures required for chapter recognition*

Director of Alumni Relations

President of the Alumni Association