

ST MARY'S
COLLEGE *of* MARYLAND

The Public Honors College

Alumni Chapter Handbook

Adopted 04/8/17

Introductory Letter

Alumni Chapter Presidents and Committee Members,

Thank you for your interest in serving as a member of an Alumni Chapter leadership team. Your efforts in bringing St. Mary's to your community plays a vital role in keeping our alumni engaged with and informed about their alma mater. In addition, Alumni Chapters are instrumental in connecting alumni with one another through social, professional, and service-oriented activities and events.

Official Alumni Chapter affiliation with the Alumni Association comes with many advantages and privileges. This handbook is designed to guide you through the process of starting and maintaining a successful Alumni Chapter, and define the expectations of the Alumni Chapter leadership team. Please refer to it when planning activities in your region. Of course, the Office of Alumni Relations is always on hand to assist you with your endeavors.

Again, thank you for your service and commitment to St. Mary's. We look forward to working with you to strengthen our already vibrant and passionate alumni community.

Sincerely,

Dave Sushinsky '02
Director of Alumni Relations

Allan Wagaman '06
President of the Alumni Association

Alumni Chapters

Alumni Chapter development is an essential element in helping the Office of Alumni Relations build and maintain relationships with the 14,000+ alumni of St. Mary's College of Maryland. These Alumni Chapters provide our graduates with social, professional, and service-oriented opportunities that benefit both the College and the individual.

There are three types of Alumni Chapters:

- **Geographic Alumni Chapters** connect alumni and other College community members within a specific region (Baltimore Metro, Southern Maryland, Denver Regional, etc.)
- **Affinity Alumni Chapters** connect alumni and College community members with a shared common attribute or activity (Black alumni, Orientation Leader alumni, lawyer alumni, etc.)
- **Academic Alumni Chapters** connect alumni and College community members from a specific academic discipline (music, biology, history, etc.)

Benefits of an Alumni Chapter Program

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

- Creating opportunities for alumni to network and meet each other in their local 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 greater College community.
- Promoting campus initiatives that support prospective and current students, particularly in recruitment, career development, and job/internship placement.

Alumni Chapter Development

Concentrations of alumni are spread throughout the United States and around the world. The Office of Alumni Relations may identify groups of alumni that would benefit from an organized Alumni Chapter, or alumni may approach the Office of Alumni Relations to explore the idea of starting a chapter.

The following steps need to be taken to formalize an Alumni Chapter:

1. For Geographic Alumni Chapters, define the region's boundaries. For Affinity and Academic Alumni Chapters, identify the uniting interest.
2. Work with the Office of Alumni Relations to publish an appeal to alumni in that defined region or affinity to serve on the Alumni Chapter Committee. Diversity in this core group helps facilitate participation from a broader-based alumni body.
3. Identify an Alumni Chapter President (or co-presidents), ideally from the members that responded to the call to be on the Alumni Chapter Committee. The selection of the Alumni Chapter President is not formal and he or she will typically self-identify or be selected by the Director of Alumni Relations and President of the Alumni Association.
4. Submit a petition for charter (*see page 14*), with no fewer than 15 member signatures, to the Executive Committee of the Alumni Council for approval.
5. Once approved by the Executive Committee of the Alumni Council, a formal petition will be presented for a vote by the full Alumni Council at the next quarterly meeting. Upon approval by the Alumni Council, Alumni Chapter recognition will be granted.
6. Once chartered, the Alumni Chapter Committee, under the leadership of the Alumni Chapter President, shall set Alumni Chapter goals. Each Alumni Chapter shall plan their goals with the assistance of the President of the Alumni Association and the Director of Alumni Relations.
7. To maintain the status of an officially recognized Alumni Chapter, all guidelines within this handbook must be addressed and followed or the Alumni Chapter may face suspension or dissolution by the Alumni Council.

Alumni Chapter Organization – President

Each Alumni Chapter will have an Alumni Chapter Committee led by an Alumni Chapter President. The Alumni Chapter President works closely with the Director of Alumni Relations and he or she will act as the liaison between the Alumni Chapter and the Alumni Council. There is no term limit for an Alumni Chapter President provided he or she is actively involved and fulfilling the duties outlined in the Alumni Chapter Handbook.

The Alumni 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 Alumni Chapter Committee.
- Organizing at least one annual strategic planning meeting with the Alumni Chapter Committee members in the fall or early winter to discuss event ideas for the year ahead.
- Maintaining an up-to-date contact list of all Alumni Chapter Committee members, and reaching out to the Alumni Chapter Committee members as needed in order to accomplish goals.
- Ensuring that all Alumni Chapter activities and initiatives are pre-approved by the Office of Alumni Relations including, but not limited to, events, programs, and communications.
- Ensuring that the Alumni Chapter holds, at minimum, one signature event per year (for geographic Alumni Chapters), in addition to an annual community service-oriented event.
- Attending as many Alumni Chapter events as possible.
- Overseeing the Alumni Chapter resources (banners, name tags, etc.) provided by the Office of Alumni Relations, and communicating when materials need to be replaced or replenished.
- Attending the Alumni Council quarterly meetings. Attendance is not mandatory, but strongly encouraged. If the Alumni Chapter President is unable to attend, a member from the Alumni Chapter Committee may attend with prior approval from the President of the Alumni Council.
- Submitting Alumni Chapter reports to the Secretary of the Alumni Council prior to Alumni Council quarterly meetings as directed by the Vice President of Operations of the Alumni Council.
- Allowing the Office of Alumni Relations to publish pre-approved personal contact information on the alumni website.

Alumni Chapter Organization – Committee

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

The Alumni Chapter Committee members are responsible for:

- Attending the annual fall or winter strategic planning meeting organized by the Alumni Chapter President.
- Assisting the Alumni Chapter President with the identification and recruitment of other Alumni Chapter Committee members.
- Providing educational, social, and/or service-oriented event ideas to the Alumni Chapter President.
- Attending as many Alumni Chapter events as possible.
- Assisting the Alumni Chapter President in creating, promoting, and executing Alumni Chapter events and initiatives.
- Educating alumni and friends within the Alumni Chapter about events and encouraging attendance.
- Using personal communication tools such as social media, email, and phone to contact other alumni and friends about Alumni Chapter initiatives and events.
- Supporting the efforts of the Office of Alumni Relations to keep alumni informed about campus news and developments.
- Allowing the Office of Alumni Relations to publish pre-approved personal contact information on the alumni website.

Alumni Chapter Support

Once recognized as an official Alumni Chapter of the St. Mary's College of Maryland Alumni Association, Alumni Chapter leadership teams are provided with the following:

- A voice on the Alumni Council through the Alumni Chapter President, as a non-voting member, with invitation to attend quarterly meetings.
- Office of Alumni Relations assistance in recruiting Alumni Chapter Committee members.
- Office of Alumni Relations assistance in the planning and implementation of approved programming and events.
- Office of Alumni Relations assistance in producing and distributing Alumni Chapter materials, including event advertisements. With the approval of the Director of Alumni Relations, Alumni Chapter Presidents will have the ability to send information to members and prospective members via email using the distribution software managed by the Office of Alumni Relations.
- Office of Alumni Relations assistance in collecting Alumni Chapter event registration information and associated fees using the event management software managed by the Office of Alumni Relations.
- Event advertising in St. Mary's College of Maryland Alumni Association publications, both print and online.
- Event funding support, in special cases. As a rule, however, Alumni Chapter events and activities should be designed to break even or be profitable.

Alumni Chapter Policies & Maintenance Requirements

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

- **Leadership:** Following the selection of a new Alumni Chapter President or change in Alumni Chapter Committee membership, the group must report changes to the President of the Alumni Association and the Director of Alumni Relations.
- **Social Media:** Alumni Chapters are expected to maintain an active social media presence to share College news and events with alumni. *See **Alumni Chapter Social Media Policy**.*
- **Events:** Any event or initiative, especially those with an associated cost, must be approved by the Director of Alumni Relations. Prior to scheduling any event, the Alumni Chapter 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. *See **Alumni Chapter Event Planning Guidelines**.*
 - **Geographic Alumni Chapters:** In addition to an annual community service event, each Geographic Alumni Chapter shall hold a minimum of one signature event per year.
 - **Affinity/Academic Alumni Chapters:** These Alumni Chapters are not required to hold annual events due to the potential geographic dispersion of the membership.
- **Logos and Graphics:** All promotional materials bearing the College or Alumni Chapter's name (event invitations, clothing, etc.) and any written or published materials, including information posted on any online resource affiliated with the College (Facebook group, LinkedIn group, etc.) must only use pre-approved Alumni Chapter logos and graphics, and be approved by the Director of Alumni Relations.
- **Member Distribution Lists:** The Office of Alumni Relations shall maintain all official distribution lists and contact information. Draft email messages should be forwarded to the Director of Alumni Relations for approval and distribution at least two weeks prior to the desired send date.
- **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 Director of Alumni Relations of St. Mary's College of Maryland.

Alumni Chapter Policies & Maintenance Requirements (continued)

- Chapter Reimbursement/ Payment Criteria: Monies spent by an Alumni Chapter President or Alumni Chapter Committee member for an event or meeting must be approved by the Director of Alumni Relations, 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.
- Annual Review and Renewal: Regardless of the original recognition date, all Alumni Chapters will come up for review by the Executive Committee of the Alumni Council at the beginning of each fiscal year (July 1). Should an Alumni Chapter be unable to adhere to the Alumni Chapter maintenance requirements, the Executive Committee of the Alumni Council may take steps to initiate the Alumni Chapter suspension/dissolution process.
- Ex-Officio Membership: In order to foster relationships with other elements of the St. Mary's College of Maryland Community, faculty and staff members are eligible to be *ex-officio* members of Affinity and Academic Alumni Chapters and may also serve on an Alumni Chapter Committee. *Ex-officio* members are not eligible to serve as Alumni Chapter President.

Alumni Chapter Social Media Policy

The Alumni Association's primary social media presence is managed by the Office of Alumni Relations; however, the Alumni Chapter leadership team will be afforded access to these resources to assist in building networks and engaging with alumni within their Alumni Chapter. The primary social media tool managed by the Alumni Chapter leadership team is via Facebook groups.

- **Facebook Group Creation:** Upon Alumni Chapter approval, the Office of Alumni Relations will create a public Facebook group for the Alumni Chapter in order to foster easier communication with interested alumni. Facebook group logos and descriptions will be designed and managed by the Office of Alumni Relations to maintain brand continuity between the Alumni Chapters. The privacy setting must be set to "open" so that the group is searchable and public.
- **Facebook Group Management:** The Office of Alumni Relations will serve as administrators to advertise College news and events. The Alumni Chapter President shall also serve as an administrator, and may elevate Alumni Chapter Committee members to serve as moderators, at the Alumni Chapter President's discretion. Alumni Chapter Presidents and members of the Alumni Chapter Committee are encouraged to post and interact in the group often, as well as ensure that content remains relevant. Please remember that the Facebook groups are public and viewable by many people, and that they represent St. Mary's College of Maryland. Posted comments, videos, and images should be monitored by the page administrators and moderators. Profanity, lewd, and/or derogatory content must be removed.
- **Facebook Group Membership:** In accordance with the Alumni Council bylaws, no member of the Alumni Association shall be disallowed from joining in or participating in Alumni Chapter social media groups. In addition to alumni and *ex-officio* members, current students shall be permitted to join and participate in Alumni Chapter social media resources. These groups must remain "open," but the group settings may be set so that requests to join must be approved by an administrator. All reasonable efforts must be made to approve membership requests from alumni in a timely fashion. If there is a question about whether a pending member is an alumnus/a of St. Mary's College of Maryland, the Office of Alumni Relations can confirm prior to making a decision to approve or deny the request.
- **Removal of a Member:** Should it appear necessary to remove a member from a social media page due to inappropriate, derogatory, or offensive conduct, the Alumni Chapter President in agreement with the Office of Alumni Relations hold the right to make that decision.
- **Facebook Events:** Upon event approval by the Director of Alumni Relations, the Office of Alumni Relations will create a Facebook event through the St. Mary's College of Maryland Alumni Facebook page. The Office of Alumni Relations will post Facebook events and event registration links to the appropriate Alumni Chapter groups. The Alumni Chapter leadership team members are encouraged to invite Alumni Chapter group members and other alumni friends to all Alumni Chapter events.

Alumni Chapter Event Planning Guidelines

Planning a successful Alumni Chapter event is enjoyable and rewarding, but involves advance planning, effective marketing, and strong communication between the Alumni Chapter leadership team and the Office of Alumni Relations. Following the guidelines below will ensure that the Office of Alumni Relations has the information and time necessary to assist the Alumni Chapter leadership team plan, advertise, and execute these events.

Event Planning Dos

- Discuss event ideas collectively and plan event goals, timeline, and individual roles for the Alumni Chapter President and Alumni Chapter Committee members well in advance
- Consider cost, accessibility by car or public transportation, most appropriate time of the year/day of the week to host the event, inclement weather plans, and potential competing events in the area
- When appropriate, contact a variety of venues to check availability, compare costs, identify group discounts and other incentives - always check online reviews!
- Use the online event planning tools found under the Alumni Chapter Resources tab on the alumni homepage
- Use the online event proposal form to submit your event idea *at least* two months in advance of the event date
- Understand that it may take up to two weeks for the Office of Alumni Relations to advertise an event once the project proposal form has been submitted and all of the event details have been confirmed
- Use personal channels to promote your event and increase attendance
- Connect with the Office of Alumni Relations at any time if assistance is needed

Alumni Chapter Event Planning Guidelines (continued)

Event Planning Don'ts

- Sign an event contract or make any verbal or written agreements with a vendor, entertainer, event manager, or professional service provider, ever
- Put down a deposit using personal funds
- Use or create any graphics or logos not approved by the Office of Alumni Relations in the promotion of an Alumni Chapter event or activity
- Try to do everything yourself - utilize the Alumni Chapter Committee and the resources and staff available at the Office of Alumni Relations
- Forget to follow up - work with the Office of Alumni Relations to determine if any volunteers, staff, or venues should be recognized and determine how and who will do it
- Hesitate to call the Office of Alumni Relations for any reason - they're here for you!

Alumni Chapter Suspension and Dissolution

The Office of Alumni Relations and Alumni Council are committed to assisting all recognized Alumni Chapters to be viable and successful. Unfortunately, when Alumni 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/Dissolution by the Chapter: An Alumni Chapter may be suspended by the Executive Committee of the Alumni Council if there is no longer an interest or ability by the Alumni Chapter President or Alumni Chapter Committee members to maintain the Alumni Chapter. The Executive Committee of the Alumni Council will acknowledge the suspension when it receives notification from the Alumni Chapter President of such a situation. The Executive Committee of the Alumni Council shall then promptly inform the Alumni Council of the Alumni Chapter's suspension status.

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

- Suspension/Dissolution Process: The Executive Committee of the Alumni Council may suspend an Alumni 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 Alumni Chapter President by the President of the Alumni Council. This notification shall include a request to participate in a conversation between the Executive Committee of the Alumni Council and Alumni Chapter leadership team to discuss the status and/or possible alternatives for the continued viability of the Alumni Chapter. If an in-person meeting is not possible, then an alternative communication method shall be coordinated between the Executive Committee of the Alumni Council and the Chapter leadership team.
 2. Depending on the outcome of this meeting, the Executive Committee of the Alumni Council will make a recommendation regarding the Alumni Chapter's ongoing status (continuance, suspension, or dissolution) to the Alumni Council.
 3. If, after one year from the date of suspension, the Alumni Chapter is not reactivated, then the Alumni Chapter may be dissolved by the majority vote of the Alumni Council.

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.

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

**minimum of 15 signatures required for chapter recognition*

Director of Alumni Relations

President of the Alumni Association