**The Purpose of F&M’s Regional Chapters Program**

**ENGAGEMENT ♦ ENRICHMENT ♦ SERVICE ♦ PRIDE**

In order to help the College secure its place among the premier liberal arts institutions in the nation, the Franklin & Marshall College Regional Chapters Program pursues the goal of greater engagement of alumni, parents and friends with one another and with the College.

Franklin & Marshall College's Regional Chapters Program is a visible platform on which alumni, parents and friends worldwide can build a lifelong relationship with each other and with the College. It makes F&M’s network of friends, talents and shared interests readily available to all F&M community members.

Chapters deliver value and achieve engagement through high-quality, innovative programs that reflect the varied geographic and demographic needs of Franklin & Marshall College alumni, parents and friends. These programs are intended to:

- Engender greater camaraderie;
- Identify and involve volunteers;
- Provide lifelong learning opportunities;
- Encourage attendance at on-campus events, especially Homecoming and Reunion;
- Develop a network that will foster professional development and career opportunities; and
- Encourage financial support of the College.

**Regional Chapters Program Overview**

Franklin & Marshall College has 20 functioning Regional Chapters of alumni, parents and friends. Eighteen are located in the United States, and two are located internationally. Chapters are divided into two main groups: Blue Chapters of 1000 or more in population, and White Chapters of fewer than 1000 in population.

The Regional Chapters program is directed and administered by the College’s Office of Alumni Relations. Each Blue Chapter has a formally organized “Chapter Council,” a committee of volunteers who meet twice each year with College staff to plan a 12-month calendar of activities for F&M alumni and friends in their respective region. White Chapters are organized more loosely, and activities in these regions are driven by volunteers who step forward as regional leaders.

Regardless of the size of the Chapter, a year’s calendar of activities should reflect a diversity of interests and appeal to a wide range of ages, income levels and backgrounds.

Chapter Council members brainstorm activities, use their local knowledge to identify event opportunities, network with F&M alumni and friends to uncover interesting programming connections, help investigate program ideas, maintain proactive communication with College staff to develop programming and serve as promoters and hosts of their regional activities.
Regional Chapters Program Operations

**Blue Chapters – Over 1000 in population:**

**White Chapters – Under 1000 in population:**
Chapters include Florida, Southern California, Western PA, Northern California, Metro Atlanta, Colorado, Metro Chicago, Delaware, Northern CT, Gulf Coast Texas, Northern Texas, Great Britain, Metro Mumbai. There are plans for future growth internationally.

**Volunteer Structure:**
Regional Chapters are represented by local Councils made up of volunteers who work with College staff to plan rewarding programs for regional communities. They serve as hosts/connectors for their fellow alumni, and represent the College to their fellow alumni. A Council will include a chair or co-chairs, general members and an Alumni Board Liaison, who provides news and insights from the Alumni Association Board.

**Staffing Structure:**
The Regional Chapters program is directed through the Office of Alumni Relations by an Associate Director with support from an Alumni Fellow.

**Organizational Support:**
The Associate Director of Alumni Relations is a Chapter’s main point of contact at the College and with organizational resources. Staff and volunteers meet twice each year – in January and again in June/July – either in person (Blue Chapters) or by telephone (White Chapters).

At meetings, we discuss news from the College, Chapter successes and challenges, and relevant training topics. Also, we plan a Chapter’s calendar for the coming twelve months. The Associate Director of Alumni Relations brings program ideas based on current faculty research and travel, athletic travel, career development workshops, College initiatives and special alumni accomplishments. Council members bring ideas based on their knowledge of their local F&M network and home town. Between meetings, the College handles logistical and promotional planning while volunteers promote and reach out to create an audience for their programs.

College staff research venues, conduct site visits and related research, build and manage budgets, make deposits, sign contracts, plan event details, research and confirm speakers, develop programs, write event plans, produce promotions, collaborate with relevant partners, manages event registration and...
staff events. The College provides a standard set of event supplies for all events. These supplies include nametags, attendance lists, welcome table overlays, relevant fliers and give-aways when available.

As needed, the College hosts conference calls with Chapter Council volunteers to supplement our meetings as we work together to execute Chapter programs.

**Financial Support:**
The College directs and manages a budget for Regional Chapters, with the fiscal year running from July 1 through June 30. The Associate Director of Alumni Relations develops and manages budgets for individual events, and works with volunteers to set registration prices.

**Promotional Support:**
The College promotes Chapter activities through the *F&M Connections* e-newsletter, *F&M Magazine*, the student calling program, select print mailings, and the College website. The Associate Director of Alumni Relations manages this promotion as well as registration on behalf of the Chapters. In addition, Chapter volunteers promote their activities through personal outreach (calls, emails), Facebook and LinkedIn.

**Early Steps in Building or Re-Building a Chapter:**

- Outreach to identify new volunteers and build Council team.
- Outreach by Council volunteers to alumni in the area – this is an effort to learn more about the kinds of programs that interest your audience and to create awareness about the Chapter.
- Schedule a meeting with new volunteers and College staff early in your first fiscal year to plan your launch and successive events. A Chapter’s fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30.
- In your first fiscal year, plan a calendar of 2-4 events for Blue Chapters and 1 or 2 events for White Chapters. Focus on programs that deliver the best of F&M, feature F&M alumni/parents/faculty, and offer “backstage access” through your F&M contacts. Showcase experiences that are uniquely F&M and only available through F&M.
- In planning a Chapter calendar, steer clear of holidays and be cautious about summer dates. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights work well for gatherings, and daytime on the weekends are great for high-content, destination programs.
- Create an outreach plan to build awareness of your first year's event calendar and to drive attendance.
- Follow up after your launch with personal calls to selected attendees to gain feedback.
- Thank-you’s to special guests/speakers, people who have helped you locally, volunteers.
- Spring survey to learn more about what your local alumni think of the Chapter experience, seek new ideas, enlist new volunteers.
Regional Chapters Program Leadership

Regional Chapter Council Chairpersons and Council members are visible leaders in their regions. They represent F&M and its regional communities, network to build those communities, get to know their resources, plan exciting programs that bring community members together, reach out to make programs successful, and serve as engaging hosts at their Chapters’ live events. Detailed descriptions of their roles are as follows:

**Regional Chapter Council Chairperson**

The responsibilities of a Regional Chapter Council Chairperson:

1.) **Your Leadership Role** - As the leader of your Regional Chapter, you foster the liveliness and growth of your local F&M community. You are the chief point of contact for alumni, parents and friends in your area. Your ability to deliver outreach in your F&M community - welcoming those who are newly active, inviting broad participation, and recognizing those who have been involved at high levels - is key to community-building in your area. You lead your Chapter's Council, the team that organizes your Chapter's programs and outreach. You are an important representative of the College in your region, and of your region to the College. You drive the activities that make the Chapter successful, both on stage and behind the scenes.

2.) **Managing Your Regional Chapter Council** – As the leader of your Regional Chapter Council, you manage the team’s efforts to plan rewarding experiences for your Chapter through its annual calendar of activities. Across that calendar, your goals are to ensure your team’s support of the Chapter Program's mission, maintain forward momentum on projects, build your local community using events as a platform, and guide your Chapter's strategic relationships.

3.) **Calendar- and Event-Planning** – You will organize two planning meetings per year with additional meetings and teleconferences as needed. Communicate early and often with College staff. Assign a member of your Council to take minutes. Email minutes to your Council with action items and assignments, and monitor your team's progress. Maintain ongoing conversation with College staff to guide your team's work.

4.) **Publicizing Your Chapter’s Events** – Work with the College to finalize events early, to take advantage of all of the opportunities for publicity provided by the College. This includes the *F&M Connections* e-newsletter, *F&M Magazine*, student callers, select mailings and the website. Lead your Council in targeted, personal outreach to support attendance at flagship events.

5.) **Be a Great Host** – Think about your guests’ experience from the moment they arrive at your events to the moment they leave. Take advantage of every opportunity to help them feel welcome, recognized and informed.

6.) **General Communication** – Communicate proactively with members of your Council. Encourage attendance at Council meetings and Regional Chapter events. Give members of your Council ownership of specific projects that play to their strengths. Model responsiveness and hospitality for your Council members. Address conflict with diplomacy, and groom a successor to chair your committee. Maintain active connections with other Chapter leaders to share ideas, best practices and resources.
Regional Chapter Council Member

Through F&M’s Regional Chapter program, alumni, parents and friends engage with one another and remain active in the life of the College. The most important role of a Regional Chapter Council Member is to help build the community in his or her Chapter as a vehicle for these shared experiences and opportunities. Council members accomplish this by supporting the development and success of a wide range of activities:

- Lifelong learning, cultural and social events featuring faculty and alumni speakers;
- Support of Diplomat Athletics – enthusiastic attendance at Diplomat “away” games;
- Engagement with the Office of Student and Post-Graduate Development (OSPGD) – promotion of alum-to-alum and alum-to-student networking, hosting professional development workshops;
- Support of the F&M Fund – participating in and encouraging others to participate in regional phonathons and the GOLD Alumni Chapter Challenge;
- Meaningful service projects; and
- Through personal interaction, helping alumni, parents and friends to become active in their regional F&M communities as supporters of one another and the College.

The work of Chapter Council members allows the Chapters to meet the unique needs of local members while advancing the mission of Franklin & Marshall. Council members work in teams to shape the Chapter experience for their members. Their work includes assisting in planning the Chapter’s annual calendar, reaching out to build a feeling of community in the Chapter, and publicly representing F&M and its alumni at special events as well as in casual encounters. Council members are always “on-stage” representing the Chapter, and they are committed to fulfill certain duties:

- Regularly attending Chapter Council meetings, calls and events;
- Inviting others to attend Chapter events and to get involved as volunteers;
- Participating in outreach efforts to local alumni and parents;
- Following through on Council projects;
- Staying connected with the College in ways that are personally meaningful, and remaining knowledgeable about the College’s goals and strategic projects;
- Encouraging attendance at major on-campus events like Homecoming and Reunion; and
- Participating in leadership development and recognition opportunities provided by the College and the Alumni Association’s Board of Directors.

In addition, Council members are strongly encouraged to contribute to the F&M Fund and support the College’s development efforts. Chapter volunteers showed tremendous support of the F&M Fund in fiscal year 2013, with 76% of our Chapter leaders participating, increased from a 66% giving rate in fiscal year 2012. In fiscal year 2014, our goal will be to achieve a 100% giving rate among our Chapter leaders!
Organizing Planning Meetings and Calls

Planning for your Chapter takes place in a number of different ways throughout the year, including formal, bi-annual planning meetings, Council conference calls and monthly calls for Chapter leaders and College staff. A description of each of these meetings follows:

**Bi-Annual Planning Meetings** –

Formal planning meetings take place twice each year, in January and in June/July for Blue Chapters, and as needed for White Chapters. The Associate Director of Alumni Relations (ADAR) organizes them in collaboration with Chapter Chairs. The meetings include the ADAR, your Chapter Council and any special guests who are relevant to planning your calendar. These meetings are held in office space, typically at the work place of a Chapter Council member, and the ADAR provides a light, deli-style dinner.

The Chapter’s Chairperson works with the ADAR to create an agenda, which always includes introductions, an update from the College, an update from the Alumni Association Board Liaison (ABL), an update from the Chapter Chair, and a brainstorming session for the year ahead. The goal of each meeting is to provide enough direction for your calendar so that events can be researched and dates set within three to four weeks following your meeting.

It is a best practice at each meeting to set the date of your next planning meeting. This allows you to add the date to Council members’ calendars early, as well as to share the date with new volunteers you might meet at your Chapter’s events throughout the year. The Chairperson should send a meeting reminder requesting RSVPs for the dinner count no less than one month prior to the meeting date. Three to four days prior to the date, the Chairperson should email an agenda to the group along with conference call details for those who are participating by phone. The College’s conference line can be booked for this purpose.

Before the meeting, the ADAR researches faculty travel, research and publications; athletics travel; professional development program topics; and alumni speakers/host possibilities for the coming year. In addition, Chapter Council members will be invited to share any ideas for faculty programs with the ADAR, who will research these possibilities before your planning session. All of our combined research and ideas are brought to the conversation at your bi-annual planning meeting, allowing the group to make decisions about their calendar on-site.

For each meeting, assign a Council member to take minutes. Minutes should include the date and location of the meeting, names of attendees, and notes on decisions made about each item on the agenda as well as any questions left un-answered and points for follow up. At the end of your minutes, make a list of action items and identify the members of your Council or staff who will follow up, as well as deadlines for follow-up where applicable. Good minutes are a great tool for managing your Council’s work forward through the year and a great starting point for drafting the agenda of your next call or meeting.
The goal of each planning meeting is to map out the coming 12 months decisively enough so that event concepts may be confirmed and dates set within three to four weeks following your Chapter’s planning meeting. This allows the Chapter to take advantage of the full spectrum of College promotional vehicles, including *F&M Connections, F&M Magazine*, student callers, select mailings and the website.

After each planning meeting, the ADAR will confirm the availability of faculty and other event resources. The ADAR will set the wheels in motion for promotional and logistical planning and execution. The Council will plan and conduct targeted outreach to drive attendance for events, build community and recruit new volunteers. And, the ADAR and Council members will maintain ongoing communication to ensure the success of your Chapter’s activities.

**Council Conference Calls –**

Between formal planning meetings, many Chapter Councils hold conference calls to follow up on progress and discuss outreach efforts. Some Councils prefer to do this monthly, while others do it quarterly. Some do it four to five weeks in advance of each of their upcoming events. With regard to Council calls, do what is right for your Chapter, based on your calendar and the needs of the volunteers.

The ADAR is available to join you on Council calls when they are scheduled during business hours, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on week days. You are also welcome to hold Council calls after hours without staff. In both cases, your Chapter is welcome to reserve the College’s conference line by contacting Alumni Relations to make the arrangements.

**Monthly Leadership Calls –**

Blue Chapter Chairpersons and ABLs are strongly encouraged to schedule an ongoing monthly call with the ADAR during business hours to review Chapter business, including preparations for upcoming events, promotions, the Council’s outreach efforts, hosting plans for specific events, and other leadership topics.

White Chapter Chairpersons and ABLs are also encouraged to schedule a regular call with the ADAR. Based on your Chapter’s calendar, you might find that a quarterly call is sufficient.
We suggest that your calendar for the year ahead should include the following:

- One event with a faculty speaker
- One Diplomat athletic event
- One professional development program in collaboration with the Office of Student & Post-Graduate Development (OSPGD)
- One or two additional events of your choice that break even in terms of cost
- An event for new graduates
- A Welcome Party for incoming first-year students (this event is organized by the College, and your attendance is strongly encouraged to help us welcome first-year students and their families)

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<th>YOUR CHAPTER EVENTS</th>
<th>CAMPUS DATES TO KEEP IN MIND</th>
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<tr>
<td>SUMMER 2014</td>
<td>Commencement -- May 10, 2014</td>
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<td>Reunion for 4’s and 9’s -- June 6-8, 2014</td>
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<td>New Student Orientation -- August 28, 2014</td>
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<td>AUTUMN 2014</td>
<td>Convocation -- September 2, 2014</td>
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<td>Fall Break -- October 10-14, 2014</td>
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<td>Commencement -- May 9, 2015</td>
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Remember to avoid religious holidays when setting dates for events.
We suggest that your calendar for the year ahead should include the following:

- One event featuring an F&M regional dean of admission and/or another F&M connection (for instance, events with faculty or alumni speakers)
- One event of your choice that breaks even in terms of cost

### YOUR CHAPTER EVENTS | CAMPUS DATES TO KEEP IN MIND
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**College Promotional Deadlines**

**F&M Connections:**

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**F&M Magazine:**

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