George Mason University
Guidelines for Regional Alumni Clubs

Introduction

This document is meant to aid alumni and the Office of Alumni Relations in the process of organizing George Mason Regional Alumni Clubs.

Purpose
The purpose of a Regional Alumni Club is to keep the spirit of George Mason University alive by gathering with fellow Patriots. George Mason Regional Alumni Clubs provide a chance to foster Patriot Pride through maintaining connections with alumni beyond the Northern Virginia and DC area. They create a network of alumni from all disciplines within a geographic area through social events, volunteering, communicating news, networking and camaraderie. Formed and led by loyal alumni volunteers, with support from the Office of Alumni Relations, alumni leaders and collaborators recognize the power of networking and enjoy interacting with their local Mason community. The creation of a Regional Alumni Club opens ongoing opportunities to share experiences and traditions and there are no fees or membership dues required to be involved.

Goals
The main goals of a Regional Alumni Club include:

- Create a sense of belonging for the Mason alumni community
- Engage alumni and Mason friends with one another and with the life of the University
- Build a sense of self-sustained energy among the members of the club
- Improve and share communication among alumni, students, and the University
- Promote Mason pride and branding within the community

The Club Difference
What is the difference between a board/chapter and a club? The George Mason University Alumni Association Board of Directors is comprised of an executive committee, at-large directors, and academic unit & affinity chapters. This is a somewhat unique structure for an Alumni Association but it makes sense for Mason. Within the board and chapters there are “officer” roles, bylaws, term limits, and member requirements such as attending our three large annual events (in Fairfax, VA). On the other hand, dubs are regionally based alumni groups with a simple structure: three or four alumni leaders facilitate activities to build Mason camaraderie, and act as ambassadors to their community by relaying information between the Office of Alumni Relations and club participants.

Establishing a Regional Alumni Club

1. Contact the Office of Alumni Relations to review the process and to make us aware that you are interested in organizing a club.
   a. The Office of Alumni Relations does not run the group, but rather the alumni representatives on the ground do. This is a “staffcoached, volunteer led” model.
2. Plan to organize a few gatherings each year to see what kind of traction you can get from alumni in the area.
a. We would recommend three types of get-togethers to highlight different areas of interest. This way you can get to know what local alumni are into and cater to build momentum. For example, people in New York may love getting together for networking events, whereas Denver alumni may be more inclined to participate in outdoor activities.

b. Put out feelers as you meet local alumni at get-togethers. See who has similar energy and interest and ask them to come alongside to help lead with your efforts.

3. At a minimum, each club should have a three or four member leadership committee. It is a lot to have one volunteer carrying the load, so we recommend a team approach to help sustain the group. You may have additional “regulars” who participate, but they won’t “own” the club in the same way organizing leaders would.

Regional Alumni Club Responsibilities

- Maintain one person as the point of contact between the Regional Alumni Club and the Office of Alumni Relations.
- Plan, coordinate and implement social, and/or professional events that are based on the interests and resources of the club, and that strengthen connections among alumni while reflecting the goals and spirit of George Mason University.
- Track attendees to each gathering (name, grad year, degree) and send the list to your alumni relations partner within one week after each event.
- Utilize the custom Regional Alumni Club logo provided by the Office of Alumni Relations for branding your group.

Regional Alumni Club Best Practices

- We recommend clubs share the common naming convention of “Mason Alumni in [City/Region]”. Regional Alumni Clubs that are consistently named make it easy to search and find groups through various platforms.
- Organize at least three alumni events per year, which are in line with the needs and interests of the community.
  - For each event, one or two club leaders should serve as the event organizers. This entails coordinating communication about the event, as well as overseeing event logistics (venue selection, registration, set up, clean up, etc.).
  - Take at least one photo and submit it to alumni@gmu.edu or to your alumni relations partner within one week, along with a short summary of the activity.
  - Communicate the club’s activities and events through social media, keeping with social media guidelines, and ensure consistent information is posted on the Mason Alumni website as provided by your alumni relations partner.
- Regional Alumni Clubs cannot charge membership fees or collect membership dues. Instead, we recommend having activity registration fees, dividing costs among members, or asking attendees to cover their own expenses for events.
- Club leadership committees will have access to Regional Alumni Club conference calls, which will allow for sharing of best practices and an exchange of ideas across the groups.
- The leadership structure of a Regional Alumni Club can be as complex or as simple as each club desires. This is often driven by the size of your region or number of alumni with a similar shared interest. At a minimum, each club should have a three or four member leadership committee.
- Help update University records by obtaining address, phone, and email changes for alumni by submitting new information to alumni@gmu.edu. These updates ensure alumni receive club information and other important news.
Support from Office of Alumni Relations

Here are some of the resources and support available to you from the Office of Alumni Relations as you get started and establish a Regional Alumni Club:

- Provide the club leadership committee with an alumni population report for its region
- Broad communication to alumni in the region*
  - Send regional emails to contactable alumni in the geographic area and promote opportunities for involvement.
  - Assist with social media presence (Alumni Association channels), and provide social media guidelines.
- Gauge the interest of regional alumni with a survey or poll to the area.
  *Due to FERPA regulations, we cannot release the contact info of alumni to you without their consent. However, you may collect emails, phone numbers, and addresses during activities if an alumni chooses to provide it directly.
  - List contact information for the club leaders and promote events on the Mason Alumni Association website.
  - Set up event registrations/RSVPs for an activity on the Alumni Association website.
  - We may be able to provide resources (material/financial) to support your efforts. Please discuss your request with your alumni relations partner.

Examples of Activities

University-Related
- Event with a Mason professor or administrator when/if they travel to the region
- Organize webinar to learn about Mason Admissions Volunteer Network
- Welcome party for new alumni/recent graduates moving to your region
- Send off party for newly admitted students from your region who will be attending Mason
- Mentor students
- Co-sponsor an event with a related student group
- Scholarship fundraiser

Athletic
- Pre-game and post-game parties
- Game watching party
- Tailgate
- Professional sports events

Networking
- Host a happy hour mixer, luncheon, or business card swap to emphasize connections and growth
- Host an educational seminar with a local alumnus/a, a representative from Mason (if available in the region), or a local high-level contact
- Online career networking event

Education/Cultural
- Theater event
- Museum visit
- Breakfast speaker series
- Cooking classes
- Gathering around local or annual events
Community Service
  • Collaborate with local community organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, soup kitchen, etc.
  • Organize a collection drive: toys, clothing, school supplies
  • Help with voter registration
  • Sponsor a local team

Family-Friendly
  • Family day at the zoo or circus or amusement park
  • Family BBQ or picnic

Social
  • Happy hour
  • Tournaments (golf, tennis, poker, bingo, etc.)
  • Holiday party
  • Beer or wine tasting
  • Outdoor movie
  • BBQ
  • Miniature golf
  • Bowling
  • Hiking
  • Gathering around local events (parades, art/music festivals, farmers market, etc.)
  • Day trip to nearby city or attraction