Introduction

So you want to start a Maryville College alumni chapter? Great! A few of us in Washington, D.C. came together in 2013 to found a new chapter. We call ourselves MC in DC. We have put together this guide to tell you what steps we took, what worked, and what needed improvement. The goal of this guide is to assist you as you form your new chapter. Of course, this is a living, changing document and will adjust as an alumni group grows and changes. Some things that have worked for us in our geographic area might not work for you but hopefully this will act as a point of reference for your alumni chapter.

Creating a stronger network of MC alumni benefits everyone!

If you have any questions regarding starting up a new chapter, please contact the Maryville College alumni office at: [insert new alumni contact info]. To contact MC in DC directly, you can email chapter leaders Marissa McInnis and Robbie Champion using the MC in DC email address: maryvillecollegeindc@gmail.com.

Why start an MC alumni chapter?

By starting an MC alumni chapter, you are creating a network for alumni to remain connected with Maryville College and fellow alumni.

It also provides you and the chapter members with personal and business opportunities for networking, professional development and social interaction and allows current students and recent graduates a resource and networking group as they explore options for post-graduate life.

Mission and Vision

Before anything else, it’s important that you formally set out a mission statement and objectives of your alumni chapter. The mission statement is an aspirational statement about the alumni chapter’s purpose and key objectives, and should guide you and the MC Alumni Office as you design the chapter. Every regional area could be a little different in their mission. For the Washington, D.C. area, we wanted to put more of our chapter’s focus on professional development and networking.

Our chapter mission statement:

MC in DC is dedicated to connecting Maryville College alumni in the metro Washington, D.C. area. We’re here to mentor current Maryville students interested in working in DC, provide informational interviews, host MC students who are visiting the area, and foster a strong Scots presence in our nation’s capital.
Reach out to Maryville College

After expressing your interest and drafting a mission/goal for your new chapter, reach out to the Maryville College Alumni Office to obtain the following:

- List of alumni in your area and their contact info
- Dedicated email address for your chapter
- Calendar of events (games, college fairs, trips that MC will participate in over the next year)

Set up a meeting with to review the information, and identify anyone else that may be interested in helping launch and support the chapter.

Launch Chapter

Now that you have a few people on your team, it’s time to launch! There’s no particular order of events you must follow, but listed are the tools we used to help promote MC in DC in its initial months:

Create a Chapter Facebook Page: Facebook has comprehensive instructions on how to start a Facebook Page. See [https://www.facebook.com/pages/create/](https://www.facebook.com/pages/create/). The goal of the Facebook page is to provide easy-to-use information on who to contact, upcoming events, and share regional MC news.

Create a LinkedIn Account: LinkedIn is a great way to find alumni that may not be on Facebook but still want to stay connected. You would simply mirror (cut and paste) the information you posted on Facebook.

Updated Email Listserve: In addition to the Facebook and LinkedIn accounts, we sent information about upcoming events to the list of regional alumni provided by Maryville College. This list will need to be regularly updated.

Lindsay Whitehurst Cooper('01) and Dustin Norwood('04) at the Capital Area Food Bank.

Alumni Office Publicity: Ask your contact in the Alumni Office to post chapter events on their alumni calendar of events, as well as advertise it in the newsletter.

Word-of-Mouth: It is SO IMPORTANT, especially in the first few months of establishing your chapter, to reach out to all the regional alumni you know, and encourage them to do the same. Some of the best connections we’ve made were through happenstance encounters. Go to Homecoming and advertise to make your presence known!

You will ABSOLUTELY have to use more than one of these tools, if not additional tools. Until your chapter is more established, you need to keep reaching out and encourage your members to do the same.
Events

You have an MC Alumni Chapter! Now for the fun part of planning your events for the coming six months to a year.

A Successful Event?

A few things that contribute to the success of an event:

- Plan an event every 1-2 months (2-3 hours each)
- Try to make each event distinct and appealing to a different group. For example, you can plan a weekend hike one month (family-friendly), followed by a happy hour (networking-focused), followed by a service event.
- Coordinate with the MC Alumni Office to see if College staff and/or students will be in your area and plan an event around it.
- Remember to be cognizant of age and abilities.
- Try to spread out your events to different geographic areas.
- Document the events, uploading photos to Facebook and sending to the Alumni Office.

What to Expect...

Every chapter’s experience will be different, of course, but here are a few things that we noticed during the development of MC in DC:

Attendance: You are starting your chapter, developing your core group, and figuring out what types of events and time frames work for folks. You may have 8-12 attend your first few events, and at some point, may just have your core group attend. Attendance often varies due to the time and location of the event.

You can easily do this through a survey, and use those responses to plan your upcoming events.

Nicole Winters-Brown ('06) and Whitman Brown ('06) at our first event: Bluegrass brunch.
Enthusiasm: The College and others will be excited when your chapter is first started--use that enthusiasm! It may wane later, so you must re-engage your audience with social media and interactive emails, Facebook and LinkedIn posts, etc.

College Support: Discuss early on what the College will and won't be able to do to support you. You may be required to do much of the planning and communicating within your core group. The College often won't be able to financially support your events.

Don’t get discouraged!
Like everything good, keeping your chapter going requires work. Sometimes you may not have that many folks attend events. Don’t let that discourage you, but serve as feedback on what types of events you should plan in the future. This will lead to some wonderful new friendships!

Tips
You have worked hard to launch your new Maryville College alumni chapter, and now you need to make sure it is established and continues to grow. Here are a few tips to help:

Create a core group of leadership: You must have points of contact for both the College and your members. You also need a core group of leaders to plan, organize, and take ownership of your chapter’s events. Develop a strategy for checking-in regularly and divide up tasks.

Be Consistent: You should plan on hosting an event every 1-2 months. Once you have several successful events, and folks realize you will continue to host these events, they may be more likely to engage knowing there will be one every month or so.

Connect with the Alumni Board: This group is a great resource for your Chapter leaders—they can help provide information about upcoming College initiatives, and what’s working at all the MC Alumni Chapters.

Make your chapter distinct: For MC in DC, since so many students come here for internships and job opportunities, we are developing an orientation guide for MC students moving to DC, and providing a resource directory for current alumni in the area to serve as professional mentors. Think about what your city and region can give back to the College, and make that your cornerstone.

Whitman Brown(’06), Michael Barrow(’71), Madlon Travis Laster(’56), Jim Laster(’56), Robbie Champion(’09), Nicole Winters-Brown(’06) and Marrissa McInnis(’04) at Naked Mountain Winery.