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Cultivating Connections

February 01, 2009 | Sarah Funderburke

Alumni had a chance to meet with one another during the Chancellor's Dinner at Liberty's Alumni Weekend in October.

As Liberty University continues to grow and expand in all aspects of student life, LU alumni are working to expand their own network. In the past few years, three separate LU alumni chapters were launched in the U.S. and up to 10 more may be established in the next six months.

“Long-term we would love to have at least one chapter in every state,” said Mark Watkins, LU Senior Alumni Relations Officer.

By summer 2009, alumni chapters will be starting up in Michigan, Florida, Pennsylvania, Lynchburg, and several other areas. With more than 125,000 alumni worldwide, these chapters allow alumni to have an active role in the future of Liberty while living in their hometown.

Alumni chapters host a variety of social, fundraising and professional development events. They also support local alumni in ministry and in church planting.

San Diego-area alumni met for a beachside bonfire on Dec. 20. This fairly new chapter also met for a San Diego Padres baseball game in August 2008.

“There can be different types of alumni events,” San Diego chapter coordinator Kevin Leinum ('98) said. “Some are specifically fun events, and other events can help the surrounding community.”

Leinum said many alumni who attended these events took their classes through Liberty University Online (formerly the Distance Learning Program).

Leinum and several other alumni chapter coordinators started their chapter by contacting the Alumni Association at Liberty.

“I have always had a love for Liberty, and I knew several LU grads in the area, and we all kind of said we need to get a chapter together,” said David Hinshaw ('94), co-coordinator with Melissa Fuquay ('00), for the Hampton Roads alumni chapter.

The Hampton Roads chapter spans several Virginia cities, including Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, Suffolk, Portsmouth, Hampton and Newport News.

“The university helped us by sending out postcards with the date of our first event and our contact information,” Hinshaw said.

Washington, D.C., chapter co-coordinator Meghan Maginnis ('04) said sharing memories with other LU alumni has been one of the best parts of chapter events.

“It’s such an incredible opportunity to meet other alumni,” Maginnis said. “Not that many years ago we were a small school, and there’s nothing like being able to swap stories with other alumni.”

Maginnis has worked with co-coordinator Gary Moritz ('03) to host a kick-off reception and family picnic for D.C.-area alumni.

Alumni chapters are encouraged to host two major events every year.

“It’s just an opportunity for the alumni, wherever they may be, to have camaraderie with other alumni and a connection to the university,” Watkins said. “We will definitely be looking in the coming months for people to lead chapters.”

Anyone interested in starting an alumni chapter in their area should contact the Alumni Relations office at 1 (800) 628-7973.

The [LU Alumni website](#) recently underwent a complete overhaul and now lists contact information for the existing alumni chapters and a calendar of alumni chapter events. Many of the current alumni chapters also have Facebook, Yahoo and Myspace groups online.