
REGENTS' HANDBOOK



Information for
Regents of the Maine Masonic College
Adopted/Updated December 12, 2010

INTRODUCTION

This booklet serves two purposes:

First, to provide prospective members of the Board of Regents of the Maine Masonic College with information about the unique duties and responsibilities they are being considered for and/or may be considering.

Second, as a reference and touchstone for *all* Regents as they endeavor to carry out the mission of the College: providing educational programs for Freemasons, their friends and their communities.

BACKGROUND

In 2005, the Grand Master of Masons in Maine, Claire V. Tusch asked Past Grand Master Walter M. Macdougall to bring together several Masons who had exhibited a sincere interest in both teaching and learning to discuss the possibility of providing advanced educational opportunities based on the foundational principles of Freemasonry. Conceptually it was felt that other jurisdictions had programs worthy of emulation but that those identified for this group should be free to ‘travel their own path’ in determining how and what the final product would look like. Each Mason was selected for his willingness to learn and to teach, to serve and to share as well as on their experiences in Freemasonry and, in some cases, their credentials as educators as well.

As this group commenced meeting monthly, the structure of this endeavor was discussed at great length. Early on too, it was agreed that these programs would not be for Freemasons alone but would be an outreach opportunity that could help elevate society. Ultimately it was decided that the best organizational format would be one similar to that of any other institute of higher learning, with governance by a Board of Regents and using, insofar as practicable, the terminology of colleges/universities.

At the outset it was recognized that each Mason brought to the table a broad variety of experiential learning but some did not have the same educational credentials that others held. This seeming inequality has not proven prejudicial and the Regents have been able to draw on the individual strengths present around the table to move the College forward. As Masons, we follow the reference in our ritual: “...who can best work and best agree.”

Although begun as an independent entity, the Maine Masonic College ultimately became a Standing Committee of the Grand Lodge of Maine. Our leadership, consisting of a Chairman and a Vice Chairman, is elected internally, annually in April. We have a total of twelve (12) Regents, each of whom is elected for a three year term.

We offer programs of varying lengths from short, informal 15-20 minute introductory presentations on through full day and multi-day presentations. In 2010 we began having an Annual Convocation with a variety of stimulating topics and speakers and have plans for

this to continue. We have developed short ‘teaser’ programs of 10-20 minutes to stimulate interest in our longer programs on the same subject. We have produced videos and will continue to do so as interest warrants. We work cooperatively with the MEALS (Masonic Education and Lodge Services Committee) and the Maine Lodge of Research in an educational ‘three-legged stool’ concept, following our own mission but welcoming the opportunity to collaborate for the benefit of Maine Masons and their communities. And finally, we are developing an active online educational component that will be open to everyone on the internet. We have NO boundaries and lots of work to do!

Our programs are open to all, with few exceptions. (Programs strictly involving private Masonic ritual, for example, would be closed to all but Masons but most have no such restriction.)

A REGENT’S DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Maine Masonic College is a VERY active group, meeting – generally – monthly. Regents are expected, insofar as possible, to attend all meetings and failing that, should advise the Chairman of the reason for their absence.

Meetings are normally held on Sunday mornings, it being the only time that everyone seemed to be able to fit in their schedule. Meetings are held at the Newport Masonic Hall, it being deemed as central to most participants.

When Regents have items they feel should be discussed at a particular meeting, they should communicate this to the Chairman well in advance in order that he may prepare an agenda which takes maximum advantage of our limited time.

Regents must also be scrupulous in avoiding ‘side conversations’ which can disrupt the thought process of the meeting. Because we’re all friends and Brothers, it is far too easy to slip into a conversation forgetting the time commitment others have made.

Regents should attend nearly all courses offered. (If the leadership isn’t interested enough in attending, the message sent is certainly not a positive one!) At present, we are offering approximately 15 programs a year so this too should be factored into time considerations.

In addition, Regents take an active role in course development and/or presentation. We recognize that not all are teachers and not all are administrators but Regent must be prepared to do more than just attend meetings. As someone once quipped, “We have enough pretty faces here already. We just need more workers!”

In addition, Regents – on a rotating basis – assume the role of “Responsible Regent” for a course, usually one where it is most easy to do based on geography. There is a checklist available online which outlines the various things which need to be done both preparatory to and at the time of course presentation. A proper learning environment is critical to transmission of knowledge and Regents play a vital role in ensuring this occurs.

Finally, there is a very active Committee structure and all Regents participate in one or more committees, both named and ad hoc. If it were not for this 'extra work', the College would be 5 years further behind than it is today.

This is NOT like a corporate board of directors where a management makes presentations and you nod sagely. This is an active group which plans, prepares and executes a program designed to provide education in the seven liberal arts and sciences from the unique perspective of a Freemason for whom such subjects are particularly important.

While some Regents spend more time on their involvement than others and some of this may be cyclical based on what's being tasked at any given time, the commitment is year-round and it is estimated that an average Regent will put approximately 20 hours or more per month into his activities with the Maine Masonic College. We know that this is a **big** 'slug of time' and usually those involved are the most task-saturated already. Why do we do it? The reward offered by the mental stimulation of those you're working with is like nothing else in Freemasonry! Collegial involvement, all for one of the highest causes of mankind – the education of others – is truly a great reward.

MAINE MASONIC COLLEGE STAFF

In addition to our Regents, we are slowly developing an administrative and support staff to assist in the work of the College. With the exception of the Secretary to the Board of Regents, Staff are free to attend meetings or not as is their choosing. They are always welcome!

Being a staff member is not considered an inferior role to that of a Regent. It is an opportunity to serve without the more exhaustive demands placed upon those with the vested responsibility for College success. As but one example, our current Board Secretary was a member of the Board of Regents for the first few years but gave up his seat in order to make room for additional working Regents. His work effort, though, continues to be equal to that of any Board member and he is treated with respect by all, few of whom remember that he's not a Regent any longer.

CONSIDERING BECOMING A REGENT?

It's WORK! That's the first and most important thing you need to know. This is not a 'show up and snooze' group: we work – and we work HARD.

We encourage you to assess your ability to commit because we know from experience that the first several meetings will involve bringing you 'up to speed'. It's a disservice to your fellow Masons to take a position and then quit soon afterwards before we've gotten the benefit of your efforts on behalf of the College. That's why we have outlined the expectations of a Regent in the hopes you will make an informed decision.

Despite the hard work, there's a GREAT sense of 'doing something of value' that you will have after each and every meeting and program. Those who've been involved with the College will tell you that they go away from Regents meetings drained but exuberant. And when you attend meetings, it's ALWAYS enriching. "It's a heck of a ride!" And you will learn something – always! If you don't, you were sleeping. You're with a bunch of VERY motivated individuals, coming from a wide variety of backgrounds, and all intent on providing the very best and most inspiring educational opportunities that any Masonic organization worldwide has ever offered. We ARE unique: of that there is no doubt. There is no other Masonic-sponsored educational program anywhere that can compare.

You should understand, before your first meeting, that all of us have the 'things we love to emote' on but that there's just too little time to do that at our Regents' Meetings. Come early and stay late. We start at 9 but most plan to arrive by 8:30 just to chat. We finish at noon or a few minutes afterwards and then sit down to a meal together with another opportunity to share and discuss.

But during meetings at the outset, we'd encourage you to follow the admonition taught to DeMolay members: "Think twice before speaking once." We strongly encourage you to read through the past minutes of our meetings to see the many, many things we've already covered. If you've got some new idea or can add something we haven't already thought about, we would greatly welcome your input but please don't feel you need to impress us immediately or that you are going to solve all the problems and smooth the road completely on your first couple of meetings. Get comfortable. Watch what goes on. Listen and learn. And we WILL ask for your input, honestly.

We're far from being a well-oiled machine. We are, in fact, easily derailed in our discussions. It is for this reason that we particularly encourage prospective Regents to take the time to understand what has gone on before – and then help us to move forward rather than causing us to re-plow old ground.

IS A STAFF POSITION MORE SUITABLE?

If you have a particular skill set, we readily welcome your assistance. This is an active program that needs many hands.

Journey Masters are needed as we develop our diploma program. This person will help a diploma program aspirant design their course program and will follow their progress as a mentor and guide.

Booklet/brochure designers (both graphic designers and copywriter creators) are especially welcome as are those with an interest in public relations and communications. We won't be successful if we aren't letting folks know we exist and publicizing our events needs a lot of 'pumping up'. It's not just summarizing what we COULD do, it's DOING IT!

We also need film technicians, producers and editors for our video and online creations. We'll teach you on the job – and it's something you might be able to use in your 'real' life.

Because the positions of Secretary, Treasurer and Registrar require special skills and exceptional time commitments, we are always looking for persons to step into these positions in order that those performing them now might have a chance for 'rest and refreshment' or – more likely – so they may plow into other areas of the College needing attention. This stuff is honestly addictive!

Because of our relationship to the Grand Lodge of Maine, only Masons are eligible for positions as Regents. However, ANYONE with an interest and motivation is welcome to assist us as a staff member. If you've got a talent you'd like to share, PLEASE let us know.

Staff positions, except the Secretary, Treasurer and Registrar, do not have the same attendance requirements and other obligations as do members of the Board of Regents.

PAY AND BENEFITS

All Masons understand the term "Master's Wages" and thus it is so in this case as well. However, rest assured that the extraordinary and unique experiences around the table at a Board of Regents meeting are priceless. If you've got a desire to learn and to expand your knowledge, this is absolutely the place you want to be.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

If you're interested in becoming a Regent of the Maine Masonic College, please contact any member of the Board and arrange to speak with them personally. Don't wait to be asked! He'll present your interest to our next Board meeting and arrangements will be made for an interview with the Chairman or Vice Chairman and another member of the Board. They'll talk with you about the good, the bad, and the completely terrific and you can jointly decide if this is a good fit.

Then, we'll welcome you to come and join us for 3-4 meetings, just to get acquainted. It's an opportunity for you to listen and learn and to make the final decision as to whether you want to come along on something that's truly unique.

HAVE WE SCARED YOU AWAY?

While the above seems daunting and, perhaps, overwhelming, it's a calling to want to provide education to those who may not even realize what they've missed. Are you up to the challenge?