Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Facebook
April 22, 2023

The Ad Hoc Committee on Facebook was charged by the council in January, 2021, and includes Allison Gammons, Mark Genszler, and Kate Hollander. We are a volunteer committee drawn from the MCAA membership (when we began, Kate and Mark were council members and Allison a volunteer from the MCAA at large, now Mark and Allison are council members and Kate has stayed on to help finish the work as a general volunteer). Our process was to meet, discuss, and draft new guidelines for the MCAA Facebook pages based on the existing norms and needs we observed (we are all currently moderators of the page). We then brought the draft to the council, which approved it after discussion, and to the moderators of the page, who were also given a chance to weigh in. Since the new norms were adopted by the mods, they have now been made official and are posted in several places on the MCAA Facebook page, including as part of a narrative post communicating our process. The community norms and guidelines we developed can be found at the end of this document.

It was also brought to our attention that the "About" section of the page was a few years out of date, so we changed the language to reflect the current status of the MCAA. In addition, we put out a call for new moderators, as well as giving current moderators a chance to step back. We got one positive response from Katie McCarthy '00. Kate Hollander will step back from admin and moderator duties at the end of May 2023. As part of efforts to increase transparency as well as friendliness, a "Meet the Mods!" post is in progress right now, with moderators introducing themselves. A list of current moderators appears at the end of this report. Upon some investigation, it seems that some extra folks have admin status on the page but are not serving actively as moderators. We suggest this get sorted out, in particular a handle that is "Marlboro College Alumni Association," which we imagine is a council member but should probably be more transparent.

We are now moderating the page according to the new norms with good success. Though moderators do sometimes have to gently remind folks posting to add a bit of context about themselves and/or the subject of their post, we have seen significantly increased activity, conversation, friendliness, and connection on the page, perhaps as a result of these new practices. We hope the new norms will become more routine soon, requiring less prompting from moderators, and starting in May, moderators will not approve posts without context (according to guidelines) but ask for them to be revised and resubmitted for approval.

The MCAA Facebook page will continue to need occasional maintenance: updating rules and norms, checking in with moderators and getting new ones as needed periodically, and just generally paying attention to the page and keeping channels open to council. Previously, all or most council members served as moderators, but that seems to be fading as a practice, so there does need to be some more formal connection between council and the moderators and the MCAA Facebook page.

As an ad hoc committee, our role was to execute our charge and then either disband or ask for a new charge to become a standing committee. We have decided that it makes sense to disband, and will do so May 31, 2023. But we feel strongly that our duties need to be taken over by another committee, either a council working group (for example, communications) or a committee external to council which might have responsibility for digital presence and connection between alumni (perhaps also overseeing other social media and/or the MCAA website, etc.).

Obviously, it is up to council how to proceed with this. In general, however, we caution against simply absorbing all these duties into the council's purview, for two main reasons: First, to avoid overload and burn-out (council simply has too much to do already and eventually, things get lost in the shuffle), and second, because broadening responsibility for MCAA activities is a valuable chance to build community involvement and get more members active and engaged. We have already seen increased interest in and activity on the page, perhaps as a result of the new norms. Simply having council take over these functions limits the chance for members to get involved in an important community space, and increases the chance that already-overloaded council members will de-prioritize maintenance of the page, necessitating the creation of another ad hoc committee in the future. While that's not the end of the world, it could be productively avoided. We suggest that the current moderators also be considered in this process; perhaps some of them might like to participate in a committee that includes oversight of the page, especially since lately the mods chat thread has been more active.

We ask that this report, submitted to council, be posted to the MCAA website in our "minutes" section (we did not keep periodic minutes so this report serves as our record) and shared with the Association via the newsletter.

Respectfully submitted,
Allison Gammons, '03
Mark Genszler, '95
Kate Hollander, '02

Community Norms and Guidelines for the MCAA Facebook Page

As adoped by the MCAA Council on May 7, 2023.

Goal of the page: To continue, sustain, and connect our community, with an expectation and invitation to provide context and background.

We envision this as a space for community conversation. In the shared lexicon of our Marlboro experience, we imagine this as equivalent to informal chatting in the Dining Hall, or a space for announcements like the Town Crier or bulletin boards. This is not a space for community governance, this is not Town Meeting.

When you post, keep in mind that people may not know you, but want to know you, so in the interest of building an inclusive, closer-knit community that is transparent to itself, when you post, please consider:
- Sharing class year, years of affiliation, type of affiliation (former student, staff, faculty)
- Providing useful context for whatever you are posting (a photo, a link, a project, etc.)
- If you choose to make a post, be prepared to engage around the topic you've introduced to the conversation.

Also keep in mind:
- Neither hate speech nor ad hominem attacks belong in this space, nor will they be tolerated. Moderators may redirect conversation, turn off comments, delete posts, and even remove members.
- While this is a private group, the internet is inherently a public space and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.
- Every Marlboro generation or cohort has its provocateurs! Dissent, questioning, and irreverence is part of our culture. But take care of yourself...take a pause if you're feeling provoked...Don't bite, don't take the bait!

- We hold space on this page for the painful feelings associated with the past few years, the circumstances of the college's closure, and ongoing uncertainties about the campus. Let's be gentle with each other. And keep the longer Marlboro timeline in mind. The most immediate past has been very painful, but our community also has a much longer past--and a present and future, too.
- Our experiences of Marlboro are rich, it's our aim to cultivate a space where we can sustain all that richness and diversity of experience, so come here with that in mind. Take care of each other and take care of yourself. Be honest and direct, but/ and take charge of your own needs. Keep the Marlboro culture in mind.

Current MCAA Facebook Moderators
- Alaina Hammond
- Allison Gammons
- Allison Turner
- Daniel Doolittle
- Genevieve Prentice
- Jessica Taylor Taraski
- Kate Hollander (until 5/31/23)
- Katie McCarthy
- Mark Genszler
- Randy George
- Spott Randolf

MCAA Facebook Administrators
- Melanie Gottlieb
- Dagmawi Isayu Eminetu
- Pamela Nye
- Ellie Roark
- Marlboro College Alumni Association
  (Note: Pamela Nye created this account using the MCAA email address on March 19, 2023, so that the MCAA Council would have permanent administrative access to the MCAA Facebook page.)