

## From our Director

Greetings, Friends,

The days are getting shorter, but we hope the Stearns Center can help add some light into your teaching world. We always think of ourselves as helping to brighten up your semester, and now, starting in January, we'll be bringing you some special **Winter LYTe**, as part of our new **Level-up Your Teaching Weeks**, featuring our best pre-semester workshops and gatherings. (Those of you who've been around long enough to remember ITS's BYTE week should know that we're not borrowing their idea **at all**, nope, nuh-uh.)

You can join us for a luminous hour, a brilliant afternoon, or a sunny day or two—whatever will help you stream a little energy and community into your preparation for Spring 2023. Our January programming is designed for people just like you: dedicated teachers looking for great conversation and maybe a few new ideas about how to bring your spring courses closer to that vision you have sparkling along in your head.

Of course, there's still time to light up your—or someone else's—week **this** semester.

- **Awards: Fri. Dec. 2:** Nominate a colleague for a 2023 teaching award: Adjunct TEA and Online TEA nominations are still open.
- **Registration**
  - **Fri. Dec. 9:** Apply for Course ReDesign Academy, Jan. 11-12
  - **Sun. Dec. 11:** Register for the January Writing retreat
- **Celebration: Fri. Dec. 9:** Online: Support student researchers by joining the virtual Celebration of Student Scholarship and posting an encouraging comment.

And do take a few minutes to see more about our Stearns Center LYTe Week events below (or [on our website](#)). This is a good time to **take a minute to register** for something that catches your eye, so you can “pay yourself first” with some bright ideas in January. (We'll send you a reminder!)

Along with our partners (including the Office of the Provost, Faculty Affairs and Development, Writing Across the Curriculum, Undergraduate Education/Mason Impact/OSCAR/CECiL, Graduate Education, GradLife, University Libraries, and Information Technology Services) we wish you all the joy you can find in light(s) you most love—sunrises, candles, students' “aha!” moments, crackling bonfires, moonlight on water, glimmers of understanding, headlights of family members returning home, holiday bulbs, the smiles of gift recipients, or cellphone lights glinting off a restaurant menu in a quiet corner—as you wrap up Fall 2022 and step into your winter break.

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E Shelley Reid, Ph.D.  
Director for Teaching Excellence

# Events & Deadlines

## December 2 | Deadline for Online Teaching (OTE) and Adjunct (ATE) Excellence Award Nominations

The 2023 George Mason University Teaching Excellence Awards are open to faculty with significant teaching experience at George Mason. See our website for more information about [OTE](#) or [ATE](#), or [click here to submit your nomination](#).

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## Course ReDesign Academy is (Mostly) Virtual again in January!

**Tuesday, January 10 and Wednesday, January 11, 2023**  
**Application Deadline: Friday December 9, 2022**

Course ReDesign Academy will be mostly online again in January! We'll use a blend of synchronous meetings and workgroups 8:30-5:00 on the two key days, plus some asynchronous pre-course learning, to support your course project. We will also offer options to complete some of the sessions *on campus, with colleagues & cookies!* Use our academy as a just-in-time consultation about teaching in a new modality or with new assignments in your Spring 2023 course—or get a jump on a course you want to build or redesign for Summer or Fall terms.

It's also not too early to think a little further ahead: new course proposals for Mason Core's "Just Societies" and "Global Contexts" categories will be sought in late Spring and Fall 2023, so that courses can launch in Fall 2024. The CECiL office is also starting to designate courses for Community Engaged Learning. Is your course ready for new outcomes and teaching approaches? We can help you think through the opportunities!

Course ReDesign Academy provides a stipend to support faculty from all ranks, levels, disciplines, and modalities as they build or revise engaging, relevant, manageable courses. [See our site for deadlines, dates, details, and FAQs](#).

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## Teaching Squares and Teaching Reflection Circles Return in Spring 2023

### Application Deadline: Monday February 6, 2023

What do other faculty actually *do* in their courses? How are they adapting to new opportunities, engaging their students, providing feedback, managing their time, and supporting long-term learning? If you join a Teaching Square or a Reflection Circle, you could find out!

**Stearns Center Teaching Squares** are a kind of professional "pot-luck dinner": a quick way to build your teaching network and learn strategies that will support your teaching. For Spring 2023, we will match interested faculty with a Square of colleagues from across the university (usually four people, but sometimes a little larger or smaller) and guide you through a quick four-part approach in February and March:

- Each Square meets once in February for introductions and planning
- Each member of the Square shares some element of a course they're currently

teaching

- Each member provides reflective feedback to the others
- The whole Square meets for a conversation about what they've learned and how they can support one another further

Joining a **Stearns Center Reflection Circle** can provide you the time, accountability, and community to support your own reflective practice and gain insights from others at Mason. For Spring 2023, we will match interested faculty with a Circle of colleagues from across the university (usually 4-6), and help you arrange four monthly meetings (75 minutes, usually virtual). Using our reflection guides, each Circle meeting will include

- 15 minutes of introduction and conversation with your Circle
- 30 minutes of individual reflective writing about your teaching and related experiences, using our three-part structure
- 30 minutes of follow-up discussion based on insights and experiences that surfaced during the reflective writing

To indicate your interest in either option for Spring 2023, or to find out more information, [please complete our two-minute form](#) by Monday, Feb. 6, 2023.

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## Stearns Center Winter LYTe 2023: Strategies and Community to Kick Off Your Spring



You deserve a boost to energize your spring teaching. Whether you have an hour or a day or more, we have options for you! Your January self will thank your December self for registering now so you can give yourself a little time and community for work that is important to you.

All events are open to all Mason instructors! For workshop descriptions and registration links, see our [Events Calendar](#).

**Multi-day mini-courses:** Join one of our communities to receive guidance, feedback, inspiration, and accountability for the work you were going to do anyway!

- **January 9-13**, Asynchronous: Designing Your Syllabus Mini-course
- **January 9-13**, Asynchronous: Designing Engaging Assignments Mini-course
- **January 10-11**, Synchronous Video: Course ReDesign Academy
- **January 11-13**, Synchronous Video: January Writing Retreat

**Short-form workshops:** Register now for one (or more!) of our early semester sessions to connect with colleagues, hone your strategies, and spark new ideas for your current and future courses.

- **Thurs. Jan. 12**, 10am-12pm: Course Proposal Workshop for Mason Core Global Contexts & Just Societies
- **Tues. Jan. 17**, 10-11am: Lecture a *Little Less*
- **Tues. Jan. 17**, 2-3pm: Introduction to Developing More Inclusive Educational Spaces
- **Wed. Jan. 18**, 12-1pm: Introduction to Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
- **Thurs. Jan. 19**, 10-11am: Redesigning Syllabi for Inclusive Classrooms
- **Thurs. Jan 19**, 4:30-5:30pm: Orientation *In Action*: Faculty Sharing Strategies

from August NFO and NAFSW

- **Fri. Jan 20**, 10-11am: Orientation *In Action*: Faculty Sharing Strategies from August NFO and NAFSW
- **Tues. Jan. 31**, 4:30-5:30pm: Introduction to Developing More Inclusive Educational Spaces
- **Wed. Feb 1**, 12-1pm: Fundamentals of Effective Teaching

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## Upcoming Continuing Professional Development Series

- January 9-15 | Blackboard Mini Course: [Designing Your Syllabus](#) | CPD Level 2 | Facilitator: Crystal Anderson
- January 17 | 2-3pm | Zoom Workshop: [Anti-Racism and Inclusive Teaching: An Introduction to Developing More Inclusive Educational Spaces](#) | CPD Level 1 Engage | Facilitator: Rachel Yoho
- January 19 | 10-11am | Zoom Workshop: [Syllabi That Support Learners and Instructors](#): Designing and Redesigning Syllabi for Inclusive Classrooms | CPD Level 1 Design | Facilitator: Rachel Yoho
- January 31-March 7 | Online | Tuesdays 12:00 – 1:30pm | [Faculty Learning Community on Writing-enriched Course Design](#) | WAC + CPD Level 3 | Facilitators: Tim Lilley & Breana Bayraktar
- February 1 | 12-1pm | Zoom Workshop: [Fundamentals of Effective Teaching](#) | CPD Level 1 Design | Facilitator: Crystal Anderson
- February 8 | 11am-12pm | Zoom Workshop: [Student Centered Assessment Strategies](#) | CPD Level 1 Asses | Facilitator: Breana Bayraktar

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## Other Stearns Center Resources

### Spring 2023 ARIT Mini-Grants Application Deadline January 30

Are you, your team, or your department working to improve anti-racist and inclusive teaching? Apply for one of our Spring 2023 mini-grants to help boost an in-progress project for faculty learning, course- or curriculum-development, or pedagogy-related programming. These capacity extending grants will support projects designed to ripple out and contribute in some way to a department's, area's, program's, or course's future faculty as they continue implementing anti-racist and inclusive teaching. For more information, [see our website](#).



ONLINE TEACHING  
COACHING  
NEWSLETTER

## Teaching Online in Spring 2023? Subscribe to the Online Teaching Coaching Newsletter!

Throughout Spring 2023 semester, our newsletter will highlight practices for quality online teaching, using **our checklist of quality standards**. We'll provide guidance for how you may implement regular and substantive interaction in your online courses, and also share strategies to support students and their learning.

Starting in mid-February, you will receive an Online Teaching Coaching Newsletter issue about every two weeks during the semester. The Newsletter will be available to you as a downloadable PDF, so that you may save and refer to these teaching strategies just when you need them.

Subscribe here: **<https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/subscribe-to-our-online-teaching-newsletter/>**

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### Stearns Center Quality Assurance resources for online courses!

**[Faculty Self-Checklist](#)**: Use the Faculty Self-Checklist to review your online course and online teaching.

**[Online Course Quality: Essential Elements](#)** :Review our infographic on Online Course Quality: Essential Elements to get the most out of your course.

Want to learn even more? Our Quality Assurance Checklist and Guidelines contains both a faculty self-checklist and essential quality indicators for each domain with examples of how they can be demonstrated in an online course. This is an extensive document, and we encourage you to schedule an appointment with our QA team if you have any questions regarding it. Email **[QATeam@gmu.edu](mailto:QATeam@gmu.edu)** to request a copy of the full guidelines. You can indicate whether you would like a brief consultation with our QA team in your email.

Contact QA Team: For any questions regarding Online Quality Assurance, please contact: **[qateam@gmu.edu](mailto:qateam@gmu.edu)**.

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## Writing Across the Curriculum

### Friday Faculty Writing Sprints

**Every Friday 9:00-11:00am | MS Teams | August 26-December 16**

Our Faculty Writing Sprints are underway, and all faculty invited to participate. Every Friday morning, you can join colleagues from across campus to build some community around your writing and to set the pace for a productive academic year. After a few minutes of check-ins and goal-setting, we spend our time quietly working together.

To participate in the sprints, register here for updates and reminders, then simply connect to our **[Faculty Writers Community workspace](#)** in MS Teams (make sure to sign in with your Mason credentials) and look for the meeting in the General channel.

Questions? Visit our **[website](#)** or email us at **[wac@gmu.edu](mailto:wac@gmu.edu)**.

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### Winter Faculty Writing Retreat

## Registration now open (with limited on-campus spaces)!

Hoping to start the new year off with some new writing momentum? Then you should register for the Winter Faculty Writing Retreat running January 11-13, 2023.

This two-and-a-half-day event offers a supportive and collegial community of peers to boost your writing productivity. Participants work on a variety of research, creative, and scholarly projects at all stages of completion.

[Registration is open through Sunday, December 11<sup>th</sup>](#), but there's no time like the present. [Click here](#) for more information, and send questions to [toretreat@facilitators@wac@gmu.edu](mailto:toretreat@facilitators@wac@gmu.edu)

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# From Our Partners

## Office of Faculty Affairs & Development

### Opportunity to Join an Affinity Group

As part of Mason's commitment to inclusive excellence, the Office of Faculty Affairs and Development supports faculty and doctoral students' affinity groups. These groups provide our diverse faculty and doctoral students with a sense of community, inclusion and belonging. The groups also serve as safe spaces for discussion of issues that impact the success and well-being of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Multiracial, Asian, Asian American, Pacific Islanders and First-Generation faculty members and historically under-served doctoral students. [Learn more about Affinity Groups here.](#)

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## OSCAR

### 1. Research Assistant Positions

OSCAR is expanding opportunities for students to learn research, creative, or scholarly methods in their field and giving faculty free support on their projects at the same time. [Learn how you can hire a research assistant.](#)

### 2. Undergraduate Student Travel Fund

The Undergraduate Student Travel Fund (USTF) supports research and scholarly related travel for undergraduates who are presenting their projects via poster, talk, screening, round table, performance, etc. USTF can support costs associated with presentations at virtual conferences. Students must apply 30 days before the start of the event. [Learn more here.](#)

### 3. Undergraduate Research Scholars Program

URSP supports undergraduate students collaborating on research, creative, or scholarly project with a faculty mentor. The spring applications are closed. Applications for summer will open after winter break. [Find more information on our website.](#)





Office of Student Scholarship,  
Creative Activities, and Research

*Presents*

**The OSCAR Virtual Celebration of Student Scholarship**

**December 9th, 2022**

| Presentations |

<https://celebration.oscar.gmu.edu>



**MASON  
IMPACT**

Any questions please contact  
[oscar@gmu.edu](mailto:oscar@gmu.edu)

#### **4. Celebration of Student Scholarship**

The Fall 2022 OSCAR Virtual Celebration of Student Scholarship will be held on December 9. Please visit <https://celebration.oscar.gmu.edu/> for more information on student registration for presenting at Celebration. Please visit the site on December 9 to watch videos and make comments on student videos. Help us celebrate our student scholars!

#### **5. Encourage Students to Apply to the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR)**

Encourage undergraduate students to submit abstracts by Wednesday, Nov. 30, for the next National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR). This conference, which will be held April 13-15, 2023, is dedicated to promoting undergraduate research, scholarship and creative activity in all fields and disciplines of study. OSCAR will pay for students' meeting registration and shared lodging at the conference. **Karen Lee** should be listed as the Coordinator on all uploaded abstracts. For details and to submit an abstract, **visit the NCUR website**. Email questions to [\*\*oscar@gmu.edu\*\*](mailto:oscar@gmu.edu).

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## University Libraries

**The Special Collections Research Center (SCRC)** at George Mason University Libraries is excited to announce their new content management system and finding aids database, available through [\*\*ArchivesSpace\*\*](#). SCRC implemented ArchivesSpace as their back-end content management system in early 2020, after using the legacy content management system Archivists' Toolkit for many years. Graduating from using the back end to a full Public User Interface was SCRC's natural next step and is a welcome upgrade for both SCRC archivists and users. With an intuitive user interface and broader search capabilities, this next iteration of SCRC's finding aids is an exciting step forward to facilitating research and making our incredible collections even more accessible. Please contact [\*\*speccoll@gmu.edu\*\*](mailto:speccoll@gmu.edu) for with questions.