

From our Director

Greetings, Friends,

Welcome back, and welcome to Spring 2023! It was great to see so many of you at our January LYTe workshops, where we met new adjunct faculty, supported experienced term faculty rebooting their courses, and connected with long-term colleagues about new course proposals and projects. We have some new projects, too: see below for more on our resources about teaching in a ChatGPT-3 era, planning a class modality switch to cope with weather or illness, or inviting one of our liaisons to consult with your department or team.

In February, we hope we'll see **you**, gaining insights for your current courses, completing that third workshop for your [CPD Teaching Credential](#), or looking ahead to future projects! I want to highlight two **new** opportunities here:

- **Friday, February 3, 10-12: Course Proposal Workshop** : Get a jump on writing Mason Core proposals for Global Contexts (new or updated from the current Global Understanding category) or Just Societies courses that you'll want to launch a year from now, so you'll be in time for registration for the Fall 2024 kickoff semester.
- **Monday, February 20, 3-4: Important Conversations in the Classroom** : In Part 1 of this two-part series, gain strategies for planning successful conversations about challenging issues.

Scroll down or check our [Events page](#) for the full list of February workshops, including sessions on assignment design, inclusive syllabi, and student engagement.

This month, you might also want to

- Sign up by Monday February 6 to join a [Teaching Square](#) or a [Teaching Reflection Circle](#), and let us help you connect with three new colleagues 2-3 times this semester.
- Nominate a long-time faculty member (>20 years) by February 17 for the [David J. King Award](#)
- Watch for the CFP for **Innovations in Teaching and Learning 2023** ...coming soon!

As a final note, we want to let you know that Ashley Joiner, our Events Manager (and key architect of our Innovations 2022 Conference, among other achievements) is moving on to plan other events for Mason. We are grateful for Ashley's work with the Stearns Center these past three years through all of the changes in our events and programming, and we

wish her the best in her future endeavors. (A search for a new Events Manager will get underway soon, so if you know anyone who might be interested in joining our team, send them our way!)

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 excitement of new beginnings this spring, as well as all the comfort of reconnecting with colleagues and students you haven't seen in a while.

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Events & Deadlines

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,

Nominate a Colleague for the David J. King Award

We are currently accepting nominations for the 2023 David J. King Teaching Award, Mason's award that honors an individual for their career contributions to the overall educational excellence of the university. Nominations of faculty who have served at least 20 years at Mason are due Friday, February 17, 2023. For more information, [please visit the awards page](#).

Faculty Development Workshops

- February 3 | 10am-12pm | Zoom | [Course Proposal Workshop](#) | Facilitators: Laura Poms, Shelley Reid, Rachel Yoho
- February 8 | 11am-12pm | Zoom Workshop: [Student Centered Assessment Strategies](#) | [CPD Level 1 Asses](#) | Facilitator: Breana Bayraktar
- February 15 | 10-11am | Zoom | Workshop: [Syllabi That Support Learners and Instructors Follow-Up: A Hands-On Syllabus Workshop](#) | [CPD Level 1 Design](#) | Facilitator: Rachel Yoho
- February 20 | 3-4pm | Zoom | Workshop: [Important Conversations in the Classroom: Preparing Your Course and Yourself](#) | Facilitator: Rachel Yoho
- February 21 | 3pm-5pm | Zoom | [Course Proposal Workshop](#) | Facilitators: Laura Poms, Shelley Reid, Rachel Yoho
- February 22 | 12:00 – 1:00 p.m. | Zoom | Workshop: [Making a Mid-Course Adjustment to Enhance Engagement](#) | [CPD Level 1 Engage](#) | Facilitator: Crystal Anderson
- February 27 | 3-4pm | Zoom | Workshop: [Important Conversations in the Classroom: Handling Situations in the Moment](#) | Facilitator: Rachel Yoho
- March 1 | 12-1pm | Zoom | Workshop: [Anti-Racism and Inclusive Teaching: An Introduction to Developing More Inclusive Educational Spaces](#) | [CPD Level 1 Engage](#) | Facilitator: Rachel Yoho
- March 3 | 10-11am | Zoom | Workshop: [Motivating Students in STEM Courses](#) | [CPD Level 1 Engage](#) | Facilitator: Laina Lockett

Stearns Center Resources

New Stearns Center Resources



Take a look at our [Spring 2023 Course and Syllabus Guidance](#), which includes links to our new (and evolving) **Teaching with AI Text Generators** advice page as well as our new **Course Meeting Contingency Planning Advice** to help you get a head start planning for spring campus closures or disruptions due to illness.

Also, this month we're announcing our **Stearns Center Liaison Program**: Each college and school now has a [Stearns Center Liaison](#) dedicated to supporting your area's growth in excellent and sustainable teaching. We want to learn about the issues and projects that your colleagues are involved in, and find ways to lend our experience to your conversations, curriculum projects, and community-building around teaching and learning.



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/>

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 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: gateam@gmu.edu.

Spring 2023 ARIT Mini-Grants Application Deadline February 6

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](#).

Turn your teaching into research with Stearns Center!

The Stearns Center is excited to offer a cohort opportunity designed to support faculty, staff, and graduate students in developing and carrying out a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning project. [View the slides from our January Intro to SoTL workshop here.](#)

Opportunities this spring will include:

- **February-March:** Optional [one-on-one meetings with us](#) to develop your ideas about a SoTL project
- **February-March:** Informal SoTL reading and discussion groups. A different project will be discussed at each meeting, so feel free to register for either or both!
 - Monday, Feb. 27, 2:30pm - [register here](#). Topic: Investigating writing through the disciplines through student interviews ([article here](#))
 - Tuesday, March 21, 11:30am - [register here](#). Topic: Investigating student collaboration in an introductory STEM class through a mixed method study ([article here](#))
- **Early April:** Q&A session with Mason's IRB to help you think about proposing human subjects research
- **End of April/early May:** SoTL Project Planning Retreat: Join us down for a half-day workshop to finalize your project plan and IRB application.

For more information, please respond to this short survey:

https://go.gmu.edu/SoTL_Cohort. Questions? Email Breana Bayraktar, bbayrakt@gmu.edu.

Writing Across the Curriculum

Friday Faculty Writing Sprints

Starting January 27 | MS Teams | Every Friday 9:00-11:00am

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.

From Our Partners

Office of Faculty Affairs & Development

Faculty Matters Workshop Series

The Faculty Matters Workshop Series is designed to address key issues central to faculty development and success. This yearlong series is a collaboration between Faculty Affairs and Research Development Service. The next workshop in the series is called *Writing Workshop for Teaching and Mentoring Statements*. The workshop focuses on how to convey the impact and effectiveness of your teaching and mentoring for renewal, tenure, and/or promotion. This Zoom workshop is on February 23 from 1:30-3:00pm. [Registration is required.](#)

Faculty Affinity Groups

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 affinity groups facilitate connections and professional partnerships and champion strategic efforts to support the success of their members. The faculty affinity groups are open to all instructional/research faculty—tenured, tenure-track, term, and adjuncts. The doctoral students' affinity group is open to all doctoral and MFA students.

- AAPI—Asian, Asian American, Pacific Islander Faculty: February 21, 12 noon - Celebrating AAPI Identity and DEI at Mason (Guest: Dr. Sharnnia Artis, VP for DEI). Please contact [Ms. Amy Ayres](#) or [Dr. Millie Rivera](#) for the Zoom link.
- Juntos—Mason Hispanic/Latine Alliance: Cafecito Hour (Coffee Hour) - February 23 at 3 p.m., Arlington Campus (Van Metre Hall, Room 716)

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.](#)**

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 for with questions.