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**Stearns Center
for Teaching and Learning**
Digital Learning | Teaching Excellence

From Our Director

Greetings, Friends,

Whether you used spring break for work or rest (or maybe a bit of both), we want to welcome you to the second half of spring semester! We know you're busy just surviving the end of term, but we hope that you'll find time to join us...

- ...for **connecting** with peers, by submitting a proposal (yes, you!) for September's ITL Conference by Friday 3/15 (we especially need proposals for brief "Teaching Talks")
- ...for **celebrating**, by marking your calendar for our Celebration of Teaching Excellence, Monday April 15, 3:30-5:30
- ...for **contributing** as an **adjunct faculty member** by reviewing our new podcast (stipended position)
- ...for **adapting and learning**, with upcoming workshops on Mid-Course Corrections, Designing Syllabi for Inclusive Teaching, Motivating STEM Students, or Incorporating Trauma-Informed Instructional Practices
- ...for **planning ahead**, by applying for June's Course ReDesign Academy

See more details and registration links below or on our [**Events Calendar**](#).

Along with our partners (including the Office of the Provost, Faculty Affairs and Development, Writing Across the Curriculum, Mason Impact, OSCAR, CECiL, Mason Core, Graduate Education, GradLife, University Libraries, Classroom and Lab Technologies, and Information Technology Services), we are glad to continue to be your partners in supporting Mason students and the learning you provide for them in all of your classes, laboratories, Zoom calls, emails, site visits, and office hours.

Shelley

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Events & Deadlines

INNOVATIONS in Teaching & Learning conference

Deadline **Extended for ITL 2024 Proposals!**

Submit a Proposal by the **extended deadline of March 15 for this year's upcoming Innovations in Teaching and Learning Conference**

The Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning invites George Mason University faculty of all ranks and types, staff, administrators, and graduate and postdoctoral students to **submit proposals** and **volunteer as reviewers** for the **16th Annual Innovations in Teaching and Learning Conference!** The conference will take place **September 19 and 20, 2024**.

This year's conference has a hybrid format with a range of options for sharing your teaching strategies, experiences, and teaching-related research. Interactive Sessions, our 50-minute, in-person sessions, feature interaction with attendees and provide takeaways that participants can use in their own teaching practice or curricular development. Teaching Talks, our virtual, 10-minute individual presentations, allow individuals to share an aspect of their own teaching practice in a more concise format. On Demand Resources allow individuals to asynchronously share teaching artifacts from their courses. Please see

the ITL 24 Session Proposal Guide for details on session types to help you create your proposal. After creating your proposal, you can upload it using the Request for Proposal Form. **The extended proposal deadline is March 15, 2024.**

2024 ITL Request for Proposals Form

Applications due April 15 for SoTL Microgrants

The goal of the **Stearns Center Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Microgrants Program** is to foster a culture of evidence-based research designed to contribute new knowledge related to teaching and learning at Mason. The microgrant program supports faculty examining classroom practice in a scholarly way, researching teaching and learning across programs or student populations, and sharing work through publication. Proposed projects can include activities at any stage of data collection, analysis, and dissemination, including but not limited to the following:

- initiating data collection for a new project
- continuing data collection for a research project-in-progress
- extending a previous project to another course, intervention, or research question
- conducting data analysis
- writing in preparation for submitting a presentation, publication, or book proposal

Need help planning a project? Come to one of the SoTL workshops on April 11: sotl.gmu.edu/connect Ready to apply? **Find the application form here.**
Applications due April 15.



Adjunct Faculty are Invited to a New Teaching Resource Advisory Group (with a Stipend!)

Are you an adjunct faculty member at Mason? Are you interested in providing feedback on a new teaching resource created for Mason faculty?

You are invited to apply to become a reviewer in the Keystone Concepts Podcast Advisory Group!

The Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning is launching Keystone Concepts in Teaching and Learning, a podcast for university educators. This podcast is designed for “the instructor on the go” with approximately 20-minute episodes focused on actionable teaching strategies that are useful across disciplines. These strategies are designed inclusively to support all students in the course – and you as the instructor! This position includes a stipend for your feedback.

Some program details:

Contingent faculty members at Mason across all disciplines and all amounts of teaching experience are invited to make an impact in inclusive teaching practices by providing feedback on faculty support resources. They will be asked to listen to the pilot program episodes (four episodes of approximately 20 minutes), provide feedback in an online questionnaire form, and participate in one focus group (60 minutes) on Zoom scheduled with options in late April or May. Advisory Group members who complete this program will receive \$150 in May/early June (timing depending on payroll processing). Participants must be on an active spring or summer adjunct

contract to be eligible to participate.

Benefits of participating:

Keystone Concepts Podcast Advisory Group participants will benefit from developing or increasing their community connections across the institution and gain insights on current teaching practices. The Advisory Group participants will directly shape support at Mason for the teaching and learning space, creating successful classroom and educational environments that support all students and faculty.

Please **complete the online form** to express interest in joining by March 25, 2024.

esign best-practices suggest a large font size for easy readability both on desktop and mobile devices.

Summer Course ReDesign Academy, June 4-5, 2024: April 17 application deadline







Are you already dreaming about your Fall 2024 courses? Maybe you're looking ahead to teaching in an active learning classroom, considering more project-based or community-integrated learning, redesigning a Mason Core course, or thinking about how to combine online and in-person modalities in a productive blend? Consider bringing a current course syllabus—or a plan for a new course—to June's Course ReDesign Academy. For more information or to submit an application, [see our website](#).


Digital Learning

Welcome to Online Teaching in Spring 2024

If you are scheduled to teach a fully-online course in Spring 2024, or if you plan to incorporate online components into your teaching, the Stearns Center Digital Learning Team at George Mason University is here to help.

Here's a list of helpful resources to support your online teaching at Mason.

<h3>Stearns Center Website</h3> <p>Check out our website for "one-stop shop" for teaching and learning information for Mason faculty. Find info about asynchronous online teaching, synchronous online teaching, and info for those new to Blackboard.</p>	<h3>Webinars</h3> <p>Visit our website for list of recorded webinars about online course design and teaching, including info about Zoom, Collaborate Ultra; and about other Blackboard Tools.</p> 
<h3>Syllabus Checklist</h3> <p>As you prepare your syllabus, see our resources for Designing Your Syllabus. Use our Online Syllabus Checklist to ensure your syllabus is complete.</p> 	<h3>Help and Consultations</h3> <p>Our Team is happy to help you! We are available via email or through Zoom meeting. Please email us at stearns@gmu.edu to request & schedule a consultation.</p> 
<h3>Student Support</h3> <p>See the links provided on Stearns Center website. Support Services include: Office of Academic Integrity (OAI); Learning Services; Assistive Technologies Initiative (ATI); Mason Libraries.</p> 	<h3>Online Quality</h3> <p>As you prepare your online courses, please review the Stearns Center Digital Learning's Quality Checklist.</p> <p>Download the Checklist and learn more at Stearns Center's Online Course Quality website.</p> 
<h3>Technology Support</h3> <p>If you need help with technology, including Blackboard & Kaltura, please contact Information Technology Services (ITS) at courses@gmu.edu</p> 	

 **Stearns Center**
For Teaching and Learning
Digital Learning | Teaching Excellence

Office of Digital Learning | Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning
Phone: 703-993-4200 | Email: stearns@gmu.edu
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George Mason University

Spring 2024 Online Teaching at Mason!

Make Spring 2024 a new start for your online teaching!

FIND TEACHING RESOURCES & TECHNICAL HELP:

Know where to find help and resources for online teaching: Whether you're new to online or an experienced online instructor at Mason, here's a list of resources to get your Spring 2024 online course off to a great start!



CANVAS
BY INSTRUCTURE

Plan for Mason's LMS Transition

For Spring and Summer 2024, Canvas has been selected to replace Blackboard as George Mason University's new Learning Management System (LMS).

For Spring 2024, courses will continue to use Blackboard.

View the transition timeline and read a list of frequently asked questions at [the Canvas LMS Transition website](#).

Perusall Learn Something New!

Want to enhance student engagement in your online course? **Consider using Perusall!**

Perusall is a social learning platform designed to promote online student engagement with learning materials in various ways. Using Perusall, students can highlight and mark text or make comments at specific points in videos and respond to discussion prompts and questions from each other and the instructor. Perusall works with your favorite course content including books, articles, web pages, videos, podcasts, and images.

Want to learn more? [Contact Us!](#)

Office of Digital Learning | Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning
Phone: 703-993-6200 | Email: stearns@gmu.edu
Suite 412 Innovation Hall, Fairfax Campus

Faculty Development Workshops

March

Workshop: Get Your Class Back on Track: How to Make a Mid-Course Correction

March 19 | 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. | CPD Level 1 Engage | Zoom | Facilitator: Crystal Anderson

Did you try something new this semester, but it did not turn out as you expected? Would you like to combat student disengagement to increase student attendance and assignment completion? In this workshop, you will learn strategies to apply during the semester to get your class back on course and reach your learning goals. This workshop counts for the CPD Level 1 Engage category. [Register here.](#)

Webinar: Honorlock Demonstration

March 20th | 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. | Zoom | Digital Learning | Facilitator(s): Kim Pulda (Honorlock) and Debasmita Giri Jana (GMU)

Honorlock provides remote proctoring software and services for higher education institutions and professional education organizations. It combines live proctors with AI proctoring software to protect academic integrity and improve the assessment experience.

Honorlock revolutionizes the way academic and enterprise institutions enable equity in online courses and exams by upholding honesty and integrity and focusing on reaffirming the trust placed in learners while ensuring integrity for the institution, the instructors' knowledge and value, and the exams themselves. [Register here.](#)

Workshop: (Re-)Designing Syllabi for Inclusive Classrooms that Support Learners & Instructors

March 20 | 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. | Zoom | CPD Level 1 Design | Facilitator: Rachel Yoho

*Formerly known as Syllabi That Support Learners and Instructors: Designing and Redesigning Syllabi for Inclusive Classrooms

Are you ready to align your courses with university commitments to inclusive teaching? Or are you developing a new course or submitting an existing one for the new university-wide tags (like Mason Core)? In this workshop, we will work to advance our understanding of inclusive course design and how to improve syllabi to be more inclusive for everyone in the space (including instructors!). During the session, we will have specific discussion time to focus on connecting these ideas with your course and your discipline. At the end of the workshop, participants will leave with a greater understanding of the potential considerations for designing and redesigning inclusive course syllabi and aligning with broader institutional initiatives and expectations.

[Register here.](#)

Workshop: Motivating Students in STEM Courses

March 27 | 9:00-10:15 am | Zoom | CPD Level 1 Engage| Facilitator: Laina Lockett

Do you teach a STEM course but feel that your students lack motivation? If you answered yes, you aren't alone. Since the pandemic, professors across the country have been expressing that they have noticed a general trend in reduced student motivation. In this workshop we will discuss theories of motivation so that you can engage your students whether you teach a large class, teach online, have many non-majors or are teaching an upper-level course. You will gain tips, tricks and ideas that can be implemented into your course this semester and beyond!

[Register here.](#)

April *(Looking ahead)*

Workshop: Promoting Academic Integrity in STEM Classrooms

April 2 | 10:30-11:45 am | Zoom | CPD Level 1 Assess| Facilitator: Laina Lockett

It seems like academic integrity has always been a concern of STEM faculty, but now with so many new technologies available to students, this topic may seem overwhelming. So, what can

be done about this ever-evolving issue? In this workshop, we will discuss ways that faculty can prevent cheating on various types of assessments including exams, projects and papers. We will also discuss what the literature says about how faculty can promote ethical discussion making in their students and what you should know about the currently available detection software. The strategies discussed in this workshop can be applied to in-person and online courses of any size so please join the workshop and join the discussion. [Register here.](#)

Workshop: Surviving to Thriving: Incorporating Trauma-Informed Instructional Practices

April 3 | 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. | Zoom | Facilitator: Rachel Yoho

Whether individual or collective, trauma can have a significant impact on lives and how students (and instructors) show up and are able to engage in the classroom. In this workshop, we will explore the concept of trauma and how it applies to the classroom, recognize a few common trauma responses, investigate several educational best practices, expand our thinking with resilient pedagogy, and begin to apply these concepts to our own teaching. Together we will move beyond minimum legal requirements or accommodations to design and implement evidence-based instructional strategies in university education. [Register here.](#)

Workshop: Fostering Engagement and Belonging with Inclusive Classroom Techniques

April 5 | 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. | Zoom | | CPD Level 1 Engage| Facilitator: Rachel Yoho

*Formerly known as Anti-Racism and Inclusive Teaching: An Introduction to Developing More Inclusive Educational Spaces

Are you ready to integrate inclusive teaching throughout your instructional spaces? Would you like to explore techniques and build tangible plans for your classes? This is where that journey begins. In this workshop, we will explore some of the definitions and terms often found in conversations about creating more inclusive classrooms. We will work together to advance our individual abilities in broadly inclusive teaching and learning to support all students. At the end of the workshop, we will have developed familiarity with concepts and terminology, explored deliberately inclusive classroom activities, and set one or two manageable goals for our classes.

[Register here.](#)

Hands-on Syllabus Workshop: (Re-)Designing Syllabi for Inclusive Classrooms that Support Learners and Instructors

April 9 | 9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. | Zoom | CPD Level 1 Design| Facilitator: Rachel Yoho

Are you ready to align your courses with university commitments to inclusive teaching? In this hands-on and collaborative workshop, we will create one specific action for increasing inclusion in your syllabus that works for you, your course, and your context. Participants are asked to bring a syllabus that they would like to focus on during the session. At the end of the workshop, participants will leave with a syllabus ready to go for the next time they offer the course.

[Register here.](#)

Workshop: Introduction to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)

April 10 | 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. | Zoom | Facilitator: Breana Bayraktar

You tried a new pedagogical approach or curricular innovation and it seemed to work! If you had studied the impact of that teaching change on your students' learning, you would have been engaging in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), which invites you to examine your classroom practices systematically, improve your teaching based on your findings, and then share your findings with others. In this introduction to SoTL, you will reflect on how and why you might want to design and implement a SoTL project in your class, and explore SoTL practices, methods and tools to help you get started. Attendees will be eligible for a drawing to win a copy of Nancy Chick's Book, *SoTL in Action*. [Register here](#).

SoTL Project Planning Workshop

April 10 | 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. | Zoom | Facilitator: Breana Bayraktar

Already have a SoTL project idea? Join us for a 90-minute virtual working session to plan your SoTL study and draft an IRB application for your research! Following a brief review of SoTL project components, attendees will brainstorm potential research questions and methods, draft plans for collecting and analyzing data, consider challenges of human subjects research, and use an IRB application template to develop application materials. Attendees will be eligible for a drawing to win a copy of Nancy Chick's Book, *SoTL in Action*. [Register here](#).

Writing Across the Curriculum

Faculty Writing Sprints!

MS Teams | Every Friday 9:00-11:00am

Hopefully, everyone is working toward the final stages of your personal summer projects. (How is it August already?) But if you need a boost to get you closer to (or across!) the finish line, then join us online this Friday for encouragement and accountability.

Each Friday morning from 9-11 a.m. the Faculty Writing Community will host both a general Summer Sprint, a bonus extension of the Friday sprints we've hosted during the academic year, and a Women's Accountability Group.

Each meeting is part of the larger Faculty Writing Community Team linked here, and these programs are sponsored by Mason's Faculty Affairs and Development, Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning, and Writing Across the Curriculum.

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

Opportunity to Join an Affinity Group

As part of Mason's commitment to inclusive excellence, the Office of Faculty Affairs and Development supports several affinity groups. These groups provide our diverse faculty, doctoral students, and staff 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, Latine, Multiracial, Asian, Asian American, Pacific Islanders, as well as faculty/staff with disabilities and historically underserved doctoral students. Finally, the affinity groups facilitate connections and professional partnerships and champion strategic efforts to support the success of their members. The affinity groups are open to all faculty (tenured, tenure-track, term, adjunct, administrative, and professional), doctoral students, and staff. [Learn more about Affinity Groups here.](#)

AAPI—Asian, Asian American, Pacific Islander Faculty

March 13, 12 noon (virtual)

BLIM—Black, Latine, Indigenous, Multiracial Faculty

March 14, 12 noon (virtual): Critical Issues Impacting BLIM Faculty

SPARK—Scholars Promoting Access, Representation, and Knowledge

Wednesday 03/19: Forge Bonds, Spark Ideas: Scholarly Connections for Community Building 3-4:30 pm (Virtual)

Juntos—Mason Hispanic/Latine Alliance

April 11, 11 30 to 1 p.m. (In person), Mertin Hall 1201. This meeting is a celebration of Pan American Day. It will feature a speaker, opportunities to engage with colleagues and all attendees are encouraged to bring a dish from their country (potluck style).

Disability & Neurodivergence Alliance (DNA)

March 27, 12 noon (virtual)

To attend any of these sessions, please contact [Ms. Amy Ayres](#) or [Dr. Millie Rivera](#) and we will send you the links for the meetings and add you to the listserv (if you so desire).

OSCAR

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.](#)

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.](#)

Launch of a university-wide tracking database

The Office of Community Engagement and Civic Learning (cecil.gmu.edu) is excited to announce the upcoming launch of a university-wide tracking database that will provide a portrait of George Mason's footprint in the community.

With this new tool, faculty and staff will be able to share the details of their community engagement and public service activities, highlight their community-engaged teaching and research, effectively share research and services with potential donors, funders, and partners, and explore what other units and centers are doing across campus. We anticipate this tool to help leverage relationships with community partners that are already established on campus to assist with coordination, communication, and building trust with community. Collaboratory allows us to take a systematic approach to highlighting academic and co-curricular service with community organizations and support the institutional mission of inclusive excellence. To find more information about Collaboratory, please visit <https://cecollaboratory.com/>. If you are interested in being part of the pilot and including your community engagement and public service projects in the database, please contact Shanelle Highsmith, Program Manager for Outreach and Partnerships, at shighsm2@gmu.edu.

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