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

From Our Director

Greetings, Friends,

Is MarPril stressing you out a bit?

You know, that blurry period between spring break and the semester's final days, when you're excited because your students are making progress on fabulous final projects, and anxious because of the administrative tasks that somehow have to all be completed in the same week? When three days of NoVA's best spring weather always seem to coincide with three crucial work deadlines?

Maybe we can help!

If you'd like a quick pick-me-up, we hope you'll join us for great snacks, excellent conversation, and the bright lights of extraordinary teachers at our **Celebration of Teaching Excellence, Monday, April 15, 3:30-5:30 pm**, in Dewberry Hall. You don't even have to personally know an award winner (though you can **check the list** just to see!): this is our day to **celebrate *you*** as well, and to celebrate the challenging, engaging, unforecastable profession of teaching.

Our April calendar still has some shimmering opportunities to connect with other Marprilly folks to consider **inclusive classroom conversations, classroom-based research projects**, and **Mason Core course proposals**.

We're also looking ahead to next fall: If you think that joining a Faculty Mindfulness Community would help you feel more settled and connected when Octerober rolls around, please **take our quick survey**.

And May-June (Mune? Mayne?) is just around the corner! This could be a good time to imagine how you will grant yourself some space not just for a well-deserved nap, but to **connect and learn** with Stearns Center. We'll be standing up a range of supports for the upcoming Canvas migration, but also bringing out our extended spaces for longer-term project planning:

- **April 17: Course ReDesign Academy** applications due for June 4-5 meetings (stipended)
- **April 29: AY25 Inclusive Teaching Grants** applications due
- **April 29:** SoTL Research Planning Workshop
- **May 14-15:** Mason Core Accelerated Professional Development Workshops
- **May 21-22: Inclusive Teaching Academy**: Save the date for our two-day, stipended Mason Core Inclusive Teaching Academy (with specific support for new Mason Core JS classes)
- **May 20-24:** GenAI Pedagogies Mini-course
- **June 6-16: Keep an eye out for our "Active Learning Classroom Bootcamp"** (online and live) to prepare for summer or fall teaching that blends pedagogical strategies to engage students

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 colleagues, community connectors, and cheerleaders whether it's MarPril, AuguBer, or DecUary.
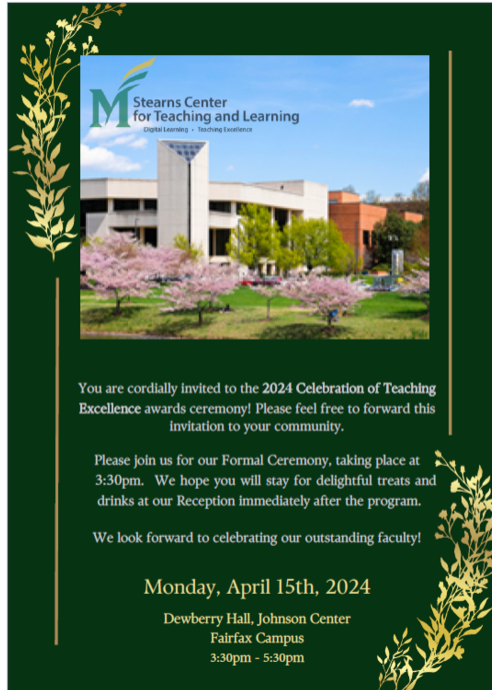
Shelley

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Events & Deadlines

Join us for the 2024 Celebration of Teaching Excellence!

Monday, April 15th, 2024
Dewberry Hall, Johnson Center
Fairfax Campus
3:30pm - 5:30pm

All members of the Mason community are invited to join us for our formal awards ceremony (3:30-4:30) with remarks from Interim Provost Kenneth Walsh, and to stay for delightful treats, drinks, music, and conversation at our reception to follow after the program!

See our website for more information about our University Teaching Excellence Award honorees.

David J King Award Winner:

Adam Winsler, Psychology, CHSS

TEA Winners:

Michele Greet, History and Art History, CHSS

Hao Jing, Chemistry and Biochemistry, COS

Rebecca Jones, Chemistry and Biochemistry, COS

James McNeil, COS - Smithsonian-Mason School of Conservation

Elizabeth Paul, English, CHSS

Kimberly Rule, Forensic Science, COS

Kelly Schrum, Higher Education, CHSS

Adjunct TEA Winners:

Sarah Rich, Advanced Professional Teacher Development and International Education, CEHD

Online TEA Winners:

Albert DeFazio, English, CHSS

Lisa Prodywus, Marketing, CCOB

Teachers of Distinction:

Melissa Ainsworth, Special Education and DisAbility Research, CEHD

Jennifer Drake Patrick, Elementary, Literacy, and Secondary Education, CEHD

Jodi Duke, Special Education and DisAbility Research, CEHD

Lisa M. Gring-Pemble, Business, CCOB

Lois A. Groth, Elementary Education PK-6, CEHD

Thomas LaToza, Computer Science, CEC, School of Computing

Lisa Rabin, Modern and Classical Languages, CHSS

Lee H. Roberts, Schar School of Policy and Government

So Young Yi, Modern and Classical Languages, CHSS

Distinguished Library Faculty Award Winner:

Lara Bushallow, Director, Digital Technologies and Services

Faculty Mindfulness Explorations: Coaching & Community for Fall 2024

Survey by April 22

Have you heard that mindfulness practices can help you (or your students), but you're not sure how to get started, or you're uncertain how to sustain a reasonable practice? Have you already explored or even adopted some mindfulness practices but would enjoy connecting with other Mason faculty who have similar goals?

The Stearns Center is expanding our mindfulness resources for faculty—not as a panacea, but as a complement to our efforts to provide formal resources for teaching, our advocacy for better recognition of the workloads of teaching, and our support of faculty community-building in many spaces. So we're **seeking participants in a Fall 2024 community** to help us explore our options—and yours! If you join us, you can expect an invitation to our intention-setting meeting the week of August 12, with F2F and virtual options; some opportunities for 1:1 coaching about your own practices; shared resources; and some monthly community events. For more information, contact **Mark Thurston** or Stearns Center. To indicate your interest as an explorer— or as a peer guide or facilitator—complete our **brief interest survey** by Monday April 22.

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.**

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.

Stearns Center Website

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.

Webinars

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.

Syllabus Checklist

As you prepare your syllabus, see our resources for Designing Your Syllabus. Use our Online Syllabus Checklist to ensure your syllabus is complete.

Help and Consultations

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.

Student Support

See the links provided on Stearns Center website. Support Services include: Office of Academic Integrity (OAI); Learning Services; Assistive Technologies Initiative (ATI); Mason Libraries.

Online Quality

As you prepare your online courses, please review the Stearns Center Digital Learning's Quality Checklist.

Download the Checklist and learn more at Stearns Center's Online Course Quality website.

Technology Support

If you need help with technology, including Blackboard & Kaltura, please contact Information Technology Services (ITS) at courses@gmu.edu

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

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.

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

April

Webinar: Gradescope Demonstration

April 12 | 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. | Zoom | Facilitator(s): Lyn Riverstone (Gradescope) and John Schell (GMU)

Gradescope helps you seamlessly administer and grade all of your assessments, whether online or in-class. Save time grading and get a clear picture of how your students are doing. Gradescope is a tool designed to streamline and standardize the grading of paper-based, digital, and coding assignments. It allows for handwritten assignments to be graded digitally, and for multiple graders to collaboratively develop and implement their grading rubrics. It supports problem sets and projects, worksheets, quizzes, exams, and papers. Please reach out to John Schell (dschell@gmu.edu) with any questions. **Register here**.

Workshop: Preparing Your Course and Yourself for Difficult Classroom Discussions and Situations

April 16 | 3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. | Zoom | Facilitator: Rachel Yoho

*Formerly known as Important Conversations in the Classroom: Preparing Your Course and Yourself

Do you have strategies to prepare yourself and your students to handle difficult conversations? This could be when you are having difficult conversations about topics like race, sexuality, religion, politics, or similar. These situations also could result from a discussion comment that makes a student or group uncomfortable or might even be about grades. In this workshop, we will discuss how to design (or redesign) your course and prepare yourself to facilitate important or "hot topic" conversations in the classroom. Background information on how to design the course and prepare for facilitating important conversations in the classroom will be provided. This workshop is applicable to instructors across all disciplines for facilitating important conversations, whether or not their designed course topics include socially pressing issues. This workshop is part of a two-part series for Mason faculty to engage in anti-racist and inclusive education across all disciplines. **Register here**.

Workshop: Successfully (Re-)Designing and Proposing a Mason Core Course

April 17 | 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. | Zoom | Facilitators: Rachel Yoho, Shelley Reid, and Laura Poms

*Formerly known as Course Proposal Workshop

Mason Core Committee is seeking course proposals for courses in the revised Global Contexts category and the new Just Societies flag. Courses planning to run in the inaugural Fall 2024 semester will need approval by Fall 2023, so it's not too early to start! Faculty interested in proposing a course for QEP-Community Engaged Learning status are also welcome!

Join us for a review of the new learning outcomes, a guide to the proposal process, and the opportunity to compose a first draft of your proposal and get some early feedback. Come on your own or bring colleagues who will help design or teach the course. And watch for announcements about upcoming course design and student engagement workshops, especially to support JS courses. **Register here**.

See more about Mason Core courses or contact Mason Core for more information (masoncor@gmu.edu).

Workshop: How to Handle Difficult Classroom Discussions and Situations in the Moment

April 23 | 3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. | Zoom | Facilitator: Rachel Yoho

*Formerly known as Important Conversations in the Classroom: Handling Situations in the Moment

Are you prepared to handle difficult discussions and charged situations in the classroom in the moment? Do you usually think of things later that you wish you would have said or done? In this workshop, we will prepare and practice how to handle important and potentially tense classroom conversations in the moment. Our focus will be on how to support everyone in the classroom – including yourself – during tense times. We will discuss and practice several teaching approaches. This workshop is applicable to instructors across all disciplines for facilitating important conversations, whether or not their designed course topics include socially pressing issues (like race, gender, religion, politics). Please note, this is the second in a two-part workshop series on important conversations. However, participants are welcome and encouraged to attend this session even if they were not able to attend part one. **Register here**.

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

April 24 | 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 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 29 | 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 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**.

May *(looking ahead)*

Workshop: Accelerated CPD Level 1 for Mason Core Part 1

May 14 | 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. | CPD Level 1 Required and DEA | Zoom | Facilitator: Crystal Anderson

Are you teaching an exploratory course in Mason Core? Would you like to participate in professional development that allows you to document your growth as an instructor? Whether you are new to college teaching or an experienced instructor, we invite you to take advantage of Part 1 of this accelerated opportunity to earn a Level 1 Teaching Essentials Credential as part of the Stearns Center's Continuing Professional Development program. Part 1 features two workshops: Fundamentals of Effective Teaching and Relate to the Real World: How to Make Your Assignments Relevant. If you complete Part 1 and Part 2 of Accelerated CPD Level 1, you will earn the CPD Level 1 Teaching Essentials Credential in two days. **Register here**.

Workshop: Accelerated CPD Level 1 for Mason Core: Part 2

May 16 | 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. | CPD Level 1 Design and Assess | Zoom | Facilitator: Crystal Anderson

Are you teaching an exploratory course in Mason Core? Would you like to participate in professional development that allows you to document your growth as an instructor? Whether you are new to college teaching or an experienced instructor, we invite you to take advantage of Part 2 of this accelerated opportunity to earn a Level 1 Teaching Essentials Credential as part of the Stearns Center's Continuing Professional Development program. Part 1 features two workshops: Make Room for the Good Stuff: How to Avoid the Tyranny of Content and Teaching and Reduce Your Workload: How to Grade Efficiently. If you complete Part 1 and Part 2 of Accelerated CPD Level 1, you will earn the CPD Level 1 Teaching Essentials Credential in two days. **Register here**.

Workshop: Introduction to Artificial Intelligence Inspired Pedagogies

May 20 – May 24, 2024 | 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. | Zoom | CPD Level 2 | Facilitator: Laina Lockett

By now you've probably heard of ChatGPT or one of the other various new large language models (LLMs) that have taken the world by storm. But do you know how to deal with the ever-evolving artificial intelligence technology as it relates to your teaching? In this mini course you will be exposed to the basics of redesigning your course as it relates to learning outcomes and instructional activities. We will also explore how to get feedback from students regarding the changes that you make. (This is the same program as the program offered January 24-February 21.) **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

Office of Faculty Affairs & Development

Register for the Adjunct Faculty Success Workshop

The Office of Faculty Affairs & Development invites all adjuncts to participate in the day-long success workshop on Saturday, August 17th, 2024. The workshop is designed to meet the unique needs and challenges that adjunct faculty face, to support transition to campus, and to develop practical strategies for success with students. The day's session will include a broad overview of working at Mason, introductions to important policies, Canvas sessions and sessions to enhance teaching skills for online and in-person classes. **Register now**

Workshop: Planning for a Productive Summer Faculty Success

April 9 | 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. | Zoom |

This is one of the most popular workshops of our Faculty Success Series and you will walk away with concrete strategies that will help you balance your research, teaching and personal goals during the summer. Doctoral students and Post-Docs are welcome!

Summer can be both a faculty member's best friend and biggest challenge. Gone are many of the routines and obligations that take priority throughout the academic year, and we often plan for productive writing, research, and scholarship days. But sometimes even our best laid plans can go by the wayside. Join us for the last of our interactive workshops to help you identify your summer goals, both personal and professional, and develop a concrete plan for achieving those goals. In this conversation, you will be asked to identify the support, you need for success and how you will ensure that this is your most productive – and enjoyable – summer.

Registration required, **sign up here**

Save the Date: Summer Faculty Writing Retreat

Save the date for the upcoming Faculty Writing Retreat on **Monday, May 13 & Tuesday, May 14**. This multi-day event—co-sponsored by Writing Across the Curriculum, the Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning, and the Office of Faculty Affairs and Development—offers an active approach to uninterrupted writing time, a chance to learn from our guest speakers, and a supportive and collegial community of peers to boost your writing productivity. Participants work on a variety of research and creative projects at all stages of completion. Registration will be available soon. **Learn more here**.

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
April 19, 12 noon (virtual)

BLIM—Black, Latine, Indigenous, Multiracial Faculty
April 17, 12 noon (virtual): The Importance of Rest to our Overall Wellbeing

SPARK—Scholars Promoting Access, Representation, and Knowledge
Thursday 04/18: Reflect & Reset: Year-End Pause and Check-In 3-4:30 pm (In person at Einstein's Bagel Bros, Merten Hall)

Juntos—Mason Hispanic/Latine Alliance
April 11, 11 30 to 1 p.m. (In person), Merten 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)
April 24, 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).
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OSCAR

Celebration of Student Scholarship and Impact

Please join us at OSCAR's annual **Celebration of Student Scholarship**

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

OSCAR — Office of Student Creative Activities and Research

Presents

The OSCAR Celebration of Student Scholarship and Impact

2024 Spring Video Showcase
April 29 - May 3, 2024 (virtual)

2024 OSCAR Expo
April 29, 2024 | 12:30 - 3:30pm
Dewberry Hall, Johnson Center
(Ground Floor)

celebration.oscar.gmu.edu

MASON IMPACT   Any questions please contact
oscar@gmu.edu

and Impact. Any student who has worked on a project this year is eligible to present at the celebration. There will be videos, posters, food trucks, and announcements of the OSCAR Excellence Awards. . Come join us to celebrate our students' accomplishments. See you on April 29.

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.**

Undergraduate Research Scholars Program

URSP supports undergraduate students collaborating on a research, creative, or scholarly project with a faculty mentor. Applications for Summer are due March 1. For more information **visit the OSCAR website**.

CECiL

CECIL — Community Engagement & Civic Learning

collaboratory®
Track · Report · Connect · Plan

Collaboratory: 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 others 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.

Share something for next month's newsletter

Add someone to our mailing list