August 2020

Dear Mason Faculty Member,

Welcome, or welcome back, to teaching at Mason! If you are scheduled to teach a fully-online course this fall, or if you plan to incorporate online components into your teaching, the Stearns Center Digital Learning Team is here to help.

Whether you’ve just begun teaching online or already have several semesters or years of online teaching experience, the Stearns Center wants to direct you to resources for quality online teaching & learning.

In this message, I will (1) direct you to the Stearns Center Teaching in Fall 2020 website; (2) share resources for designing and teaching online courses; (3) inform you of consultations, webinars, and other training opportunities available through the Stearns Center and our partners; (4) provide you with a syllabus checklist to ensure that yours is complete; and (5) promote campus services for supporting students, including important resources for academic integrity and for making your online courses accessible.

(1) Stearns Center Teaching in Fall 2020 Landing Page: Check out our website for “one-stop shop” for teaching and learning information for Mason faculty for Fall 2020. You also may use the search tool at the bottom of any of our site pages to locate resources for your specific teaching topics.

(2) Resources: Our Teaching in Fall 2020 site now includes information about asynchronous online teaching, synchronous online teaching, hybrid teaching, and also information for those new to Blackboard (with a course template to upload). Also visit Teaching Online on the Stearns Center website, where you will find steps for successful online course design and online teaching experience.

(3) Consultations, Webinars, and Other Training Opportunities: Please visit our website for updated information and schedule; keep checking for updates and new resources, as this page is still in progress and being updated regularly.

- **Office Hours/ Consultations:** This is a new service! Stearns Center Virtual Office Hours are designed to support faculty with course-design questions about your organization, course content, activity design, assignments and exams, converting in-class experiences to new modalities. Please visit our website for office hour schedule and how to access office hours.

- **Webinars:** Visit our website for list of recorded webinars about online course design and teaching; Zoom and Collaborate Ultra; and about other Blackboard Tools. Throughout Fall semester, the Stearns Center Digital Learning Team will hold a series of webinars about specific topics for online teaching, including online discussions, class engagement and interactions, accessibility, mini-lecture videos, group work, and online course readiness & quality. Please check the Stearns Center website regularly for updates.
Other Professional Development for faculty at Mason: Visit our [website](https://www.gmu.edu) for a list of links to other support offices on campus offering professional development.

(4) Syllabus Checklist: The syllabus sets the structure and tone for the course. It clearly defines student and instructor expectations. The Stearns Center website has information for [Designing Your Syllabus](https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu), including sample statements about academic integrity and accommodations for disabilities. For Fall 2020, we also include sample language for policies for new course structures and interactions. As you finalize the syllabus for your upcoming online course, review the [Online Syllabus Checklist](https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu) to ensure that it is complete. Your program or department might have specific guidelines for course syllabi, so check with them as well.

(5) Supporting Students at George Mason University: Links to Mason student support resources and services are provided on the [Stearns Center website](https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu). We wish to highlight the following offices and services:

- **Office of Academic Integrity (OAI):** Visit the [Faculty Resource Center](https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu) on the OAI website for detailed information about syllabus language, preventative resources, referral submission portal, and common faculty questions. You also are encouraged to incorporate the [Academic Integrity Training Module](https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu) (created by the Office of Academic Integrity and Stearns Center Digital Learning) into your online course & teaching.
- **Assistive Technology Initiative (ATI):** Please visit ATI website for the [Mason C.A.RES guide](https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu), a step-by-step guide to Creating Accessible RESources.

If you have any questions about online teaching or seek additional or specific guidance in preparing your fall online course, please contact us at stearns@gmu.edu.

We hope your fall 2020 online course is a rewarding and productive experience! Stay well and safe!

Best wishes,

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