

## From our Directors

Greetings, Friends,

What. A. Year.

In addition to all of the ways our lives have changed in the past 12 months, we want to take just a minute to join you in reflecting on how our lives as educators have **not just changed, but evolved.**

Every single one of you has brought your teaching into new modalities, building new assignments and new ways of engaging with students. We know that among other life challenges, many of you have keenly felt the loss of connection with your students—and the loss of what now seems like the amazing ease of stepping into a room to lead a class where everyone is sharing the same space and smiling at one another as we collaborate on discoveries and projects.

But the Stearns Center team members are also deeply impressed with the resilience, dedication, and creativity that so many of you have shown to *making your teaching work* despite all of the challenges. We admire the hundreds and hundreds of you who have attended webinars, workshops, and extended courses with Stearns Center and ITS, and the thousands more who have learned new technologies on your own, assisted your colleagues with their courses, designed innovative opportunities for your classes, and provided support to students in the wee hours of the night. When so much else had to shut down, teaching and learning at Mason continued—and continued to excel.

And we would argue that teaching has in many ways improved, or at least has created opportunities for improvement: as a community, we go forward this spring and into next fall with vastly more options for reaching students, for connecting them to experts and opportunities in our region and around the world, and for collaborating with colleagues on innovative curriculum design. Classroom projects that might have seemed impossible a year ago may now seem only mildly improbable. We see you and your work and your successes, as well as the frustrations. We're planning in upcoming weeks to share some of those success stories more widely, but for now, we give you credit—and we hope you give yourself and your colleagues credit—for all the jobs amazingly well done...and still in progress!

We continue to look for ways to provide opportunities to support you and other Mason faculty this spring, and we are starting to look ahead to options for summer and fall. Please see below for information on these and other programs:

- **Deadline Extended:** ITL "On Demand" Session Proposals
- **New Resource:** Stearns Center YouTube Channel
- **March 10 and 11:** Workshop on Providing Feedback on Student Projects
- **March 19:** Meet & Greet others who do research on their teaching (SoTL/DBER)
- **April 5:** Deadline for Course ReDesign and Faculty Learning Committee applications

Along with our partners (including the Office of the Provost, Faculty Affairs and Development, Mason Impact/Undergraduate Education, Writing Across the Curriculum, University Libraries, Graduate Education, GradLife, and Information Technology Services) we are inspired by all you have achieved in the past 12 months, and looking forward to continued innovation (and maybe some nice spring afternoon walks among the flowers) in the upcoming months!

Shelley & Faisal

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## Events & Deadlines

### 2021 Innovations in Teaching and Learning Conference

September 20-24, 2021 | Online

Deadline Extended for 2021 ITL Conference Proposals for the On Demand Collection  
Thank you to everyone who submitted a speaker nomination or session proposal last week for Mason's 13<sup>th</sup> Innovations in Teaching and Learning (ITL) conference! We had more submissions

than ever before with 83 speaker nominations, 23 interactive session proposals, and 50 proposals for the On Demand Collection. Nominations and proposal submissions are already out to reviewers and we plan to send out presenter notifications late March/early April. Didn't have time to submit a proposal for Mason's **2021 Innovations in Teaching and Learning conference** last week? Trying out a new strategy or activity this semester that wasn't quite ready to share? Good news—there's still time! While we are no longer accepting speaker nominations or interactive session proposals, we are still accepting proposals for video, digital poster, and teaching artifact contributions for the On Demand Collection through May 21, 2021. See the [RFP page](#) for details.

## Faculty Development Workshops

### NEW for Spring 2021: Stearns Center *Continuing Development Program & CPD Credential*

Join us for one or more virtual workshops, or complete three workshops and earn our new “Level One” Professional Development credential to document your commitment to improving your teaching.

All workshops are open to faculty, staff, and graduate instructors across disciplines and ranks, at all levels of experience. Workshops are interactive and focused on just-in-time strategies you can apply directly to your own course materials during the meetings. This year has shown us how much we are all still learning about teaching; CPD workshops are designed to help you improve strategically, build your network, and demonstrate your progress.

Our *Teaching Essentials CPD Series* includes workshops to help you plan or upgrade your syllabus, first week, activities, assignments, and/or grading strategies using face-to-face, web-conferencing, and asynchronous modalities.

Our *Online Course Essentials CPD Series* includes workshops to help you create high-quality course design, improve your course accessibility, design engaging assignments and activities, create effective videos, and/or plan for a range of authentic assessments in your online course.

Our *Teaching Explorations CPD Series* includes workshops to help you blend learning across Zoom and Blackboard, create active learning in our new (socially distanced) Horizon Hall rooms, design and assess the impact of clearer assignment prompts, and explore the new collaboration software coming for Summer 2021.

For more information, [please check our website](#).

### CPD: Providing Feedback to Support Student Revision

Wednesday March 10th | 11:00am-12:30pm | Zoom

Thursday March 11th | 11:00am-12:30pm | Zoom

Participants in this webinar will learn more about how students revise and gain some strategies for providing feedback to support more substantive student revision.

Register for [one of the two available sessions here](#).

### Writing Event: Work on your SoTL/DBER grant proposals, articles, and presentations

Friday, March 19 | 9:00 - 11:00 am | Zoom

Join the Stearns Center and Writing Across the Curriculum for a **Faculty Friday SoTL/DBER Write-In Event** dedicated to working on your Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) and Discipline-Based Education Research (DBER) projects. Think of this as carving out time to get portions of your grant proposals, articles, or conference presentations written (and maybe even submitted!). The SoTL Collaboratory Director will briefly share SoTL/DBER resources (9-9:10am); and be available to answer questions and give feedback on projects throughout the rest of the event's “writing time.”

Please [register](#) for this event to receive the Zoom link. (This event is partially funded by a 4-VA Grant.)

### Researcher Meet & Greet Event: DBER/SoTL

Friday, March 19 | 1:00 - 3:00 pm | Zoom

Join colleagues from across Mason who are engaged in (or interested in) Discipline-Based Education Research (DBER) or Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Projects. This Meet and Greet Event will include opportunities for participants to share research interests and current/future projects, as well as brief presentations on grant proposal development, project design, and IRB compliance support available at Mason (by Office of Research Development, Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, and the Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning).

Please [register](#) for this event to receive the Zoom link.

### Summer Course ReDesign Academy

Application deadline: April 19, 2021

Workshop Dates: June 8-9, 2021

Are you already dreaming about what you'll do differently as we meet the “new new normal” in Fall 2021? Maybe you're looking ahead to teaching in person in an active learning classroom—like one of the brilliant new classrooms in Horizon Hall—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](#).

## Stearns Center Faculty Learning Communities Reboot for Fall 2021

### Indication of Interest Deadline: April 5, 2021

Stearns Center and our partners will sponsor four FLCs in Fall 2021; you can indicate your interest between now and April 5 by filling out our two-minute survey:

- The New “Blended” Learning: Strategies for Engaging Students Across Modalities
- Exploring Anti-Racist and Inclusive Teaching Across the Curriculum
- Teaching with Writing Across Disciplines
- SoTL and DBER for Everyone: Strategies for Inquiring into Your Own Teaching

Faculty who complete a yearlong FLC—participating in 4-5 meetings each semester—earn a Level 2 Professional Development Credential from Stearns Center.

If you have another idea for an FLC, you can propose to lead your own Faculty Learning Community to start in Fall 2021, and engage in thoughtful conversations with your peers. Up to \$3500 in funding (for facilitators and supplies) is available per year-long group. For more information about FLCs or to send a proposal, [see our website](#), or [drop us an email](#) with questions or ideas!

### CPD: Creating Equitable Learning Opportunities Through Transparent Assignment Design

April 9, 2021 | 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. | Online

Transparent instruction is a technique that promotes student success on several dimensions and is easy to apply in both online and face-to-face settings. This event is brought to you by the Virginia Educational Development Network and the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), with generous financial support from the Lumina Foundation. Spaces are limited.

Please contact [Crystal Anderson](#), Stearns Center, for more information about this workshop and the TILT Higher Ed Project.

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdw\\_UIUI9rQIlvEt1ZBIlgPZpDS\\_joaJTtYGLzPuvkDp23CQQ/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdw_UIUI9rQIlvEt1ZBIlgPZpDS_joaJTtYGLzPuvkDp23CQQ/viewform)

# Online Teaching Opportunities and Resources

### Stearns Center Digital Learning YouTube Channel

Faculty are encouraged to make use of the Stearns Center’s new [Digital Learning YouTube channel](#). In addition to the Center’s existing resources/information space, the channel’s short videos are a good way of learning and reflecting on various “how-to-do” things—such as teaching online tips, instructional design, multimedia, and technology—without spending time on text-heavy documents. Faculty can also use these Mason-specific videos without using or referencing other external links. Faculty will have a quick understanding of various topics relevant to teaching and learning, understand how to integrate and manipulate LMS features specific to Mason, and use these published videos for classes if needed.

The Stearns Center plans to publish and update relevant short videos on essential and helpful teaching and learning topics throughout the year. Subscribe to and visit our YouTube channel regularly and often, as we will be expanding our video offerings in the coming months.

### Stearns Center’s Office Hours and Consultation

Stearns Center staff are teleworking and will be glad to assist you with any questions related to teaching, managing, and developing your face-to-face, hybrid or online courses; we can respond via email or Zoom. Please submit your questions by clicking [here](#). We work to answer your questions as quickly as possible; however, response times may vary.

### Teaching Online in Spring 2021

Transitioning a course to an online format can be a complex process that holds tremendous teaching and learning potential. Selecting online learning activities and assessments that effectively support the course learning outcomes requires a great deal of planning. Review Stearns Center’s resources to assist you with planning for your online course.

Please see our updated [Stearns Center website](#) for resources for online teaching, including teaching tips for Blackboard, webinars, and workshops. We will be updating our webpages regularly, so check back for new information and resources. Check “Teaching in Spring 2021”, “Teaching Online” and “Webinars & Trainings” from the buttons on our [home page](#).

### Self-Paced Courses to Improve Your Course Design Skills

Stearns Center is currently offering two self-paced courses, open to all faculty and instructors. Once you enroll, you can work through the modules in order, or you can skip to specific sections that will help you with your current course design. Each course has an “Ask a Question” discussion forum staffed by Stearns Center and is supported by office hours (see above) and by ITS Courses support through [courses@gmu.edu](mailto:courses@gmu.edu).

For more information or to enroll in a course, see our [Consultations, Webinars and Trainings page](#).

### Subscribe to our Online Teaching Newsletter

If you are new to teaching online, or you’d just like a little more support, we invite you to subscribe to our Biweekly Online Teaching newsletter. In each newsletter, you will receive tips, guidance and resources concerning a specific online teaching topic. By subscribing to the Stearns Center Online Teaching Newsletter, you will receive a newsletter issue about every 2 weeks.. Occasionally you may receive a special issue of the newsletter (i.e., outside of the biweekly sequence) or a two-part issue. The Newsletter will be available as a downloadable PDF so that you

may save and refer to the online teaching topics when you need the information. [Subscribe here.](#)

If you have a special request for online teaching information that you'd like to receive in a future issue, please contact [stearns@gmu.edu](mailto:stearns@gmu.edu). We will add your requested topic to the Newsletter list, create a special issue of the Online Teaching Newsletter, and send it out to all subscribers. You can view previous editions of the Online Teaching newsletter in [Our Newsroom](#).

## Stearns Center News

### The Stearns Center is hiring two positions!

#### Student Position: Media Specialist

The Office of Digital Learning within the Office of the Provost seeks a student intern Media Specialist to aid in the production and support of online learning materials including short videos, infographics, animations, and presentations. Students will gain first-hand experience working with instructional designers and faculty on media-based projects ideal for creating a compelling portfolio of work for future job searches.

This position is telework only, intended for around 10-15 hours per week. This position is open to undergraduate and graduate students.

[View the full position description and log-in to Handshake to apply](#)

#### Part-time Position: Office Manager

The Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning at George Mason University is currently seeking a part-time Office Manager. This position reports to the team's Operations Manager and serves a team of approximately 12 administrative faculty and classified staff. The Stearns Center is very active with multiple teams, projects and events that serve faculty across the university.

Primary responsibilities include general office management, part-time staff supervision and fiscal management, including budget systems (eVA and pCard purchasing according to university guidelines), budget reconciliation, and travel authorizations and reimbursements.

[View the full position description and apply](#)

## From Our Partners

### Writing Across the Curriculum

#### Friday Faculty Writing Sprints

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

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, 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).

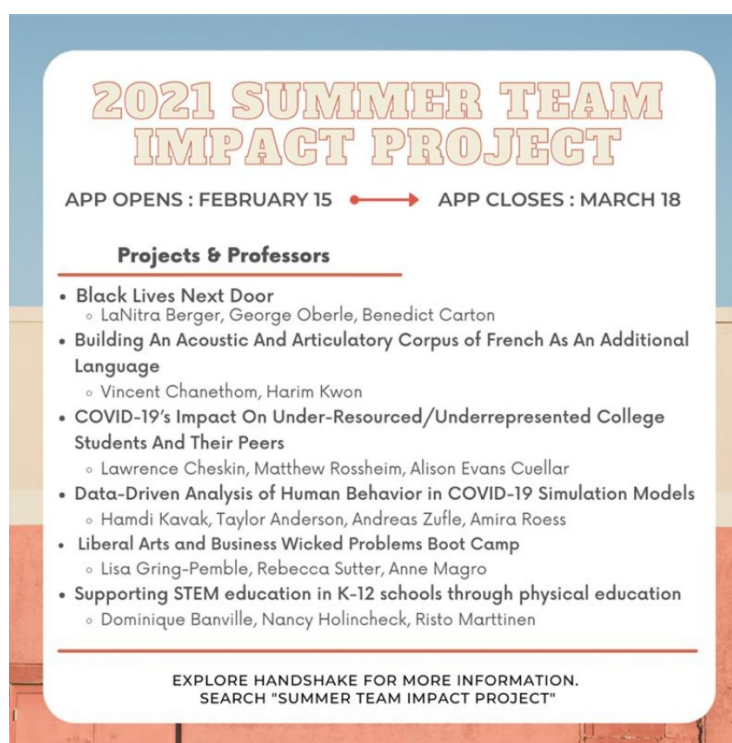
### Undergraduate Education

#### Summer undergraduate research opportunity!

STIP is an interdisciplinary, faculty-led summer research opportunity. Students will have the opportunity to learn to tackle a global question or challenge, to work independently and on a team, and will contribute to the creation an original scholarly project and communicate their findings.

Students are expected to work full-time (40 hours a week) for ten weeks in the summer, and are paid a \$4,000 stipend.

Applications for [STIP 2021](#) are currently open for undergraduate students! Find this opportunity by searching "Summer Team Impact Project" on Handshake.



**2021 SUMMER TEAM IMPACT PROJECT**

APP OPENS : FEBRUARY 15 → APP CLOSES : MARCH 18

**Projects & Professors**

- Black Lives Next Door
  - LaNitra Berger, George Oberle, Benedict Carton
- Building An Acoustic And Articulatory Corpus of French As An Additional Language
  - Vincent Chanethom, Harim Kwon
- COVID-19's Impact On Under-Resourced/Underrepresented College Students And Their Peers
  - Lawrence Cheskin, Matthew Rossheim, Alison Evans Cuellar
- Data-Driven Analysis of Human Behavior in COVID-19 Simulation Models
  - Hamdi Kavak, Taylor Anderson, Andreas Zuffe, Amira Roess
- Liberal Arts and Business Wicked Problems Boot Camp
  - Lisa Gring-Pemle, Rebecca Sutter, Anne Magro
- Supporting STEM education in K-12 schools through physical education
  - Dominique Banville, Nancy Holincheck, Risto Marttinen

EXPLORE HANDSHAKE FOR MORE INFORMATION.  
SEARCH "SUMMER TEAM IMPACT PROJECT"

### OSCAR

#### OSCAR Excellence Awards are right around the corner!

**Nomination Deadline:** March 8, 2021

OSCAR sponsors two awards each academic year:

#### Student Excellence in Undergraduate Scholarship

This award recognizes student excellence in undergraduate scholarship, creative activities, and

research.

To nominate an undergraduate student(s) for this award, please visit our [Student Excellence Awards page](#)

#### Research Mentor Excellence Awards

This set of awards recognizes the outstanding contributions of faculty or graduate students who mentor undergraduate research or creative activities.

To submit the nomination form for mentors, please visit our [Mentoring Excellence Awards page](#)

#### 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. During COVID-19 restrictions, USTF can support costs associated with presentations at virtual conferences. Students must apply 30 days before the start of the event. For more information go to the USTF page.

#### 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

##### Applications for the fall will be open in April

URSP supports undergraduate students collaborating on a research, creative, or scholarly project with a faculty mentor. [Find more information on our website.](#)

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