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Stearns Center  
for Teaching and Learning  
Digital Learning | Teaching Excellence

## From Our Director

Greetings, Friends,

It's tempting to let the start of another March prompt us to look back (all of those "the last class I taught before spring break 2020" memories can be really vivid!), we find our Stearns Center team also eager to look forward.

We're particularly excited about our plans for an in-person Innovations in Teaching and Learning Conference next September! We're so eager to have you—yes, you—come and share the best ideas that you're taking forward into your next round of teaching that we've **extended the submission deadline to Wednesday, March 9, 2022**. See below for more information.

And we are hopeful about rebooting our Celebration of Teaching Excellence as an in-person event with food, music, and all your favorite people. Please **save the date: Monday May 2, 12-2 pm**.

Meanwhile, we're continuing in March to offer more opportunities for you to expand your repertoire, regardless of what modality you're teaching in now, or looking forward to teaching in summer or fall.

If you have an hour free, we invite you to join us via Zoom:

- **March 4, noon: *Use Bb Grade Center like a pro***
- **March 9, 1 pm: *Implement more inclusive course design strategies***
- **March 23, noon: *Create inclusive, transparent assignments with TILT***, our new favorite teaching strategy
- **March 30, 11am: *Provide supportive feedback without getting overwhelmed***, using strategies recommended by our WAC program

Finally, it's not too early to be thinking about your next course design adventure: applications for our June 2022 Course ReDesign Academy, scheduled for June 7 & 8, are due Tuesday April 19.

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, Undergraduate Education/Mason Impact/OSCAR/CeCIL, Graduate Education, GradLife, University Libraries, and Information Technology Services) we wish you a productive March with the calm, completely uneventful Spring Break you so richly deserve.

Shelley

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## Events & Deadlines

# INNOVATIONS in Teaching & Learning conference

### EXTENDED DEADLINE Request for Proposals: Mason's 2022 Innovations Teaching & Learning (ITL) Conference

**Deadline: Wednesday, March 9, 2022**

The deadline to submit session proposals for Mason's 2022 Innovations in Teaching and Learning (ITL) conference has been extended to Wednesday, March 9th. This event (in-person, with some live streaming, Friday, September 30, 2022) is an opportunity for the whole Mason community to come together to exchange teaching strategies, tips, tools, and resources with each other. This year, we've made participating easier than ever, with a variety of session types and a streamlined proposal process. Please review the [Request for Proposals webpage](#) for information and to apply.

### Summer Course ReDesign Academy, June 7-8, 2022

**Application deadline: April 19, 2022**

Are you already dreaming about your Fall 2022 courses? Maybe you're looking ahead to teaching in-person in an active learning classroom, 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](#).

## Faculty Development Workshops

### Workshop: How to Use Grade Center in Online Courses

**March 4, 2022 | Zoom | 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. | Facilitators: Larisa Olesova and Joe Balducci**

During the workshop, the participants will walk through the Blackboard grade center organization process. They will get basic understanding of how grade center works and how to align the grade book to the course grading schema. By the end of this workshop, the participants will have an opportunity to practice building their own grade center. [Register here](#).

### Webinar: Inclusive Course Design and Teaching

**March 9, 2022 | Zoom | 1:00 - 2:00 pm | Facilitator: Laura Todd**

In this webinar, we will describe the importance of inclusive and equitable teaching for our students. We will share practical, easy-to-implement tips for how you can design, create, and support an inclusive and equitable online learning environment. You will create a list of your own priority action items for small changes that you can make right now in your course, regardless of modality (e.g., asynchronous courses in Blackboard, hybrid courses, synchronous remote courses), and plan for changes and improvements in your course over time. [Register here](#).

### Workshop: Inclusive Teaching Using the TILT (Transparency in Learning and Teaching) Method

**March 23, 2022 | Online | 12:00 - 1:00 pm | Facilitator: Crystal Anderson**

Are you interested in increasing the confidence and sense of belonging of your students? Would you like to learn simple strategies to promote student success in face-to-face and online courses? Do you want more students to benefit from your assignments? In this workshop, you will learn about the Transparency in Learning & Teaching (TILT) framework, which equitably promotes student success. [Register here](#).

### Webinar: Providing Feedback to Support Student Revision

**March 30, 2022 | Online | 11:00 am - 12:30 pm | Facilitator: Tom Polk**

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

### Stearns Center Events Calendar

Never miss an event! See our [Events Calendar](#) for full descriptions of upcoming workshops, and generally to stay up to date on all Stearns Center trainings, workshops, webinars, and deadlines.

### New Applications Help Students Engage Online: VoiceThread and Harmonize

In an effort to continuously improve opportunities for engagement and collaboration in Mason's online and hybrid courses, we are introducing two new tools within Blackboard: VoiceThread and Harmonize. Learn more about these tools, and watch the recorded demonstrations on the Stearns Center's [Webinar & Training page](#). To receive access to either application for your Spring 2022 course(s), please complete the [License Request Form](#). Licenses are limited during this pilot year and will be distributed on a first-come-first-served basis. Faculty are encouraged to describe a plan as to how they would like to use either tool in the upcoming year.

## Writing Across the Curriculum

### Friday Writing Sprints Continue

**Every Friday of the semester | 9:00 - 11:00 am | MS Teams**

Our Friday Writing Sprints are in full swing. All faculty members with any kind of writing project are invited to participate. Add them to your calendar, tell your friends, and prepare to marvel at just how much you can accomplish in two-hours alongside your fellow Mason writers. [Visit our website](#) for more information and to register.

### Resources for Teaching with Writing

The WAC Program continues to add new resources for teaching with writing to [our website](#). As the semester continues, you might find our brief guides on assignment design, low-stakes writing assignments, and feedback helpful. You might also want to consider joining us for one of our [upcoming workshops](#). Finally, WAC staff are available to talk with individuals, groups, or departments about writing instruction and curriculum design. To arrange a consultation, please email us at [wac@gmu.edu](mailto:wac@gmu.edu).

## Stearns Center News

### Stearns Center is Hiring a Graduate Assistant and an Educational Developer

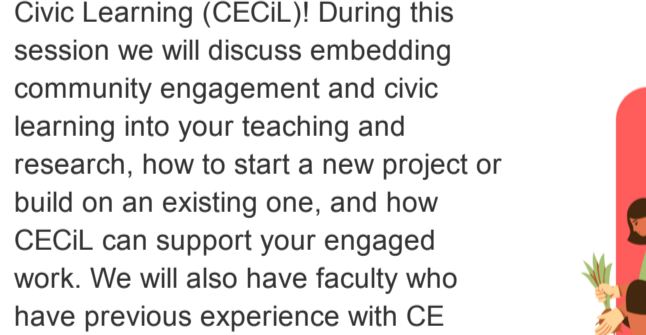
#### Graduate Assistant, Anti-Racist and Inclusive Teaching

**Application deadline: Monday, March 14** for our 2022-2023 Graduate Assistant position. [See more information here](#).

#### Educational Developer, Hybrid Pedagogy Focus:

**Application Review begins: March 21, 2022**

Stearns Center is hiring an Educational Developer with a specialization in hybrid and cross-modal pedagogies, course design, and faculty development. This position will provide broad support for faculty as they continue to adapt their teaching to take advantage of opportunities to combine in-room, synchronous video, and asynchronous online learning environments, and thus to support Mason's "Portfolio of Choice" goal of engaging students in whatever course modality—or combination of modalities—best supports their learning. [See more information online](#).



Check out our [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. [Click here](#) to request a copy of the full guidelines. You can indicate whether you would like a brief consultation with our QA team when submitting the form.

Contact QA Team: For any questions regarding Online Quality Assurance, please contact: [gateam@gmu.edu](mailto:gateam@gmu.edu)

Questions? Contact the Stearns Center at [stearns@gmu.edu](mailto:stearns@gmu.edu).

### Stearns Center Consultations

Stearns Center staff 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.

## From Our Partners

### Office of Community Engagement and Civic Learning (CECIL)

#### QEP Community-Engaged Teaching and Research Info Session

**March 8 | 3:00 pm | [Zoom link](#) & [Zoom link](#)**

Learn more about Mason's [Quality Enhancement Plan "Transformative Education through Anti-Racist Community Engagement"](#) and the new Office of Community Engagement and Civic Learning (CECIL)! During this session we will discuss embedding community engagement and civic learning into your teaching and research, how to start a new project or build on an existing one, and how CECIL can support your engaged work. We will also have faculty who have previous experience with CE teaching and research there to share examples and help answer your questions. Please email [Kristen Wright](mailto:Kristen.Wright@gmu.edu), CECIL Director, with any questions.

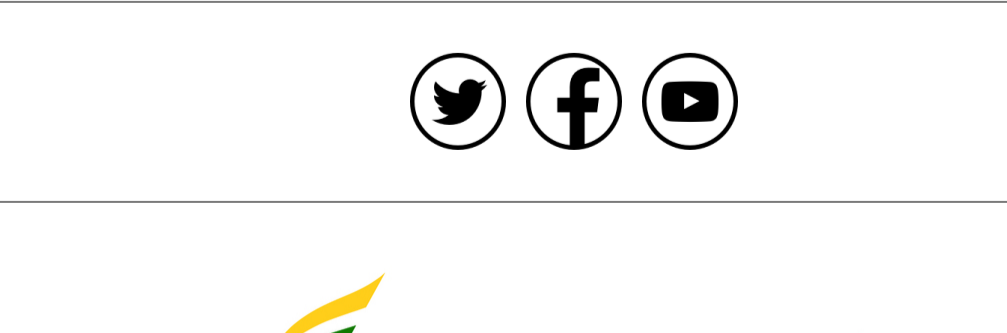
### Community Engaged Teaching & Research Info Session

Hosted by the Office of Civic and Community Engagement  
Learn more about the Quality Enhancement Plan to embed civic engagement into the Mason curriculum. Hear from Mason faculty with hands-on experience with CE teaching and research. (Please email CECIL with any questions through @gateam@gmu.edu)

March 8th @ 3pm  
<https://gmu.zoom.us/j/94405644030>

March 28 @ 12pm  
<https://gmu.zoom.us/j/93048815665>

### University Libraries



#### Faculty Workshop Series: Faculty Fridays with the Libraries

**January - April 2022 | Zoom**

Ever wondered about how to organize your research? Curious about how Mason Libraries can support you in your instruction? For answers to these and many more questions, join us this semester for Faculty Fridays with the Libraries, a workshop series catered to all your research and library-related instruction needs. In these workshops, we will introduce you to the tools, services, and people that will help you be a more efficient and organized researcher and instructor! [Visit our website](#) for more information about the workshops in this series.

### OSCAR

#### 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 Summer 2022 Cycle are open now**

**Deadline: March 21**

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

#### 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, presentations, round table, performance, etc. USTF can support costs associated with presenting at virtual conferences. Students must apply 30 days before the start of the event. [Learn more here](#).

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