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From Our Director

Greetings, Friends,

It's finally May, and we know you may be thinking, "Enough, already! Enough with this pandemic, these politics, this pollen!" We hear you, and we sympathize.

And also, your Stearns Center crew has a slightly different message we'd like to share:

You are enough.

- You have been generous, flexible, and caring enough this semester.
You have given enough feedback, in enough modalities, on enough projects, during enough late nights.
You have asked enough of yourself and your students.
You have worried enough, encouraged enough, stood firm enough, listened enough.
You have absolutely worked enough.

Because we know you: you're Mason faculty, and you take that work seriously enough to make a difference in students' lives, every week of even the most difficult semesters. While many of your courses and students have been successful this spring, we also know that for many of you, some of the results you're seeing as you close out this semester of teaching feel concerning, perhaps even discouraging.

We want to assure you that it's not you: we are all paddling upstream against headwinds of sustained trauma, from illness, inequity, and economic distress. We can do enough, even more than enough, and still not meet the mark of previous years, even as we continue to meet students wherever we can connect with them. Teaching center staff are hearing similar stories from faculty across Mason—and across the Commonwealth—and across the nation. We do encourage you to reach out to your colleagues to support you and your students as we move into upcoming academic terms.

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 time for connection, contemplation, contentment, and conviviality as you finish Spring 2022 and embark on new projects and pathways.

Shelley

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Events & Deadlines

2022 Teaching Excellence Award Winners

We want to congratulate and celebrate the following faculty members, who were recognized at the May 2 ceremony:

- Sherri Ann Huerta, History: Adjunct Teaching Excellence Award
Cortney Hughes-Rinker, Anthropology and Global Affairs: Teaching Excellence Award
Aditya Johri, Information Sciences and Technology: Teaching Excellence Award
Peggy King-Sears, Special Education and disability Research: Teaching Excellence Award
Haagen Klaus, Anthropology: Teaching Excellence Award
Susan Lawrence, English and Writing Center: Teaching Excellence Award
Kate Sweeney, Communication/Journalism: Teaching Excellence Award
Jane Flinn, Psychology: Teacher of Distinction
Emily Green, Musicology: Teacher of Distinction
Jenna Krall, Global and Community Health: Teacher of Distinction
Michael von Fricken, Global and Community Health: Teacher of Distinction
Leah Adams, Psychology: SCHEV Outstanding Faculty Award
Amarda Shehu, Computer Science: SCHEV Outstanding Faculty Award
George Oberlie, History: Distinguished Library Faculty Award
Afra Saeed Ahmad, Psychology: Online Teaching Excellence Award
Graziella Pagliarulo McCarron, School of Integrative Studies: Online Teaching Excellence Award
Andre Manilius, Electrical and Computer Engineering: David J. King Award

Faculty Development Workshops

Designing Transparent Assignments Mini-Course

June 13-24 | Online | Blackboard

Would you like to create assignments that are more likely to enhance student performance, tap into motivation and make your grading easier? In this ten-hour mini-course, faculty will create/redesign an assignment for greater transparency, enhancing the performance of all students, with historically underserved students showing the greatest gains. Using the Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TILT) framework, faculty will align their assignment with their learning goals as well as learn and implement the elements of transparent assignment design for one of their courses. Register here.

Mini-Course: TOPS (Teaching Online Practices and Strategies)

May 23 - July 18, 2022 | Online | Blackboard

Facilitators: Laura Todd and Catesby Porfirenko

Get a start on your online or hybrid course with the TOPS (Teaching Online Practices & Strategies), an 8-week, asynchronous, project-based course set in two parts:

Learning the theory and the basic principles of online course design, and Application of the theories and principles to create a fully online course module in Blackboard.

PREREQUISITES: Participants should have basic knowledge of how to navigate Blackboard and create content items such as modules or course folders, discussion forums, quizzes, and assignments.

Participants must have at least a draft of their syllabus available prior to the beginning of the program. Registration via Blackboard here.

Strategies for Implementing the New SETs this spring

The Effective Teaching Committee of the GMU Faculty Senate, which has spent the last five years working to develop the new SET instrument that was approved for use beginning this spring, is providing recommendations for faculty to successfully implement the new evaluations. See our website for more information, or contact Tom Wood, chair of the ETC, for more information (twood@gmu.edu).

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.

Writing Across the Curriculum

Apply Now through June 5: Faculty Writing Fellow

Writing Across the Curriculum, the Stearns Center, and Faculty Affairs and Development are seeking a Faculty Writing Fellow to support and develop opportunities for faculty members to carve out space for writing and build a supportive writing community at Mason. The Fellowship is a 2-year commitment, with each Fellow serving as "Incoming Fellow" in their first year and "Continuing Fellow" in their second year, alongside a new Incoming Fellow. For more information, including how to apply, please see our linked announcement.

Summer Faculty Writing Retreat: Registration now open!

Registration Deadline: May 8

Hoping to start the summer with a blast of writing productivity? Consider registering for the Summer Faculty Writing Retreat, held virtually on Zoom, running May 17th – 19th. This two-and-a-half-day event offers 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 is open through Sunday, May 8th, but there's no time like the present. Click here for more information. Please send questions to retreatfacilitators at wac@gmu.edu.

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 arrive at just how much you can accomplish in two-hours alongside your fellow Mason writers. Visit our website for more information and to register.

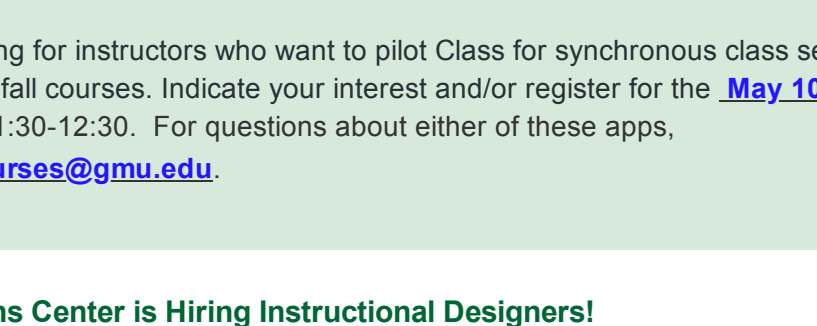
Resources for Teaching with Writing

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.

Stearns Center News

Want to Learn about How to Humanize Your Online Course?

Want to learn how to "humanize" your online course? Humanizing is all about bringing the human element into our online classrooms to build connections, increase engagement, and support meaningful learning. This Summer, the Stearns Center Online Teaching Newsletter will feature tips and best practices for how to humanize online courses and teaching, to create an inclusive online class environment in which all students feel that they belong and are welcomed, valued, and respected. Apply these humanizing elements as you plan and prepare your upcoming online courses for Fall 2022 and beyond! Subscribe now to receive these helpful tips throughout the Summer.



New Education Apps Available: PollEverywhere and Class by Zoom

PollEverywhere provides a safe platform for participants to ask questions, participate in group activities, and share thoughts and insights, right from their phone or computer. All faculty now have access to PollEverywhere as licensed presenters with access to many enhanced features. Join us as we kick off with a presenter training facilitated by PollEverywhere on Monday, May 9 at 10 am. Register here.

Answer our poll to see how easily you can gather responses. We'll post the result to Blackboard after our kickoff training.

Class creates a teaching specific interface on top of Zoom. Instructors can more easily

- Monitor activities in all Breakout Rooms at the same time
Track attendance and participation
Allow students to only share their cameras with the instructor
Sort your students in multiple ways (participation, alphabetically, hand raised, etc.)
Jump into a private video chat with a student during a class session

ITS is looking for instructors who want to pilot Class for synchronous class sessions in summer or fall courses. Indicate your interest and/or register for the May 10 training session, 11:30-12:30. For questions about either of these apps, contact courses@gmu.edu.

The Stearns Center is Hiring Instructional Designers!

The Stearns Center is GROWING! We are looking for 2 Instructional Designers to join our dynamic Digital Learning team. We would love IDs with a strong background in working with university faculty on the design and development of online/hybrid courses and in using LMS, Blackboard preferably. This is a great opportunity for those looking to be innovative in Instructional Design work!

View the posting on the GMU Jobs site to find out more info and to apply. If you have any questions about the application or position, please email us at 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.

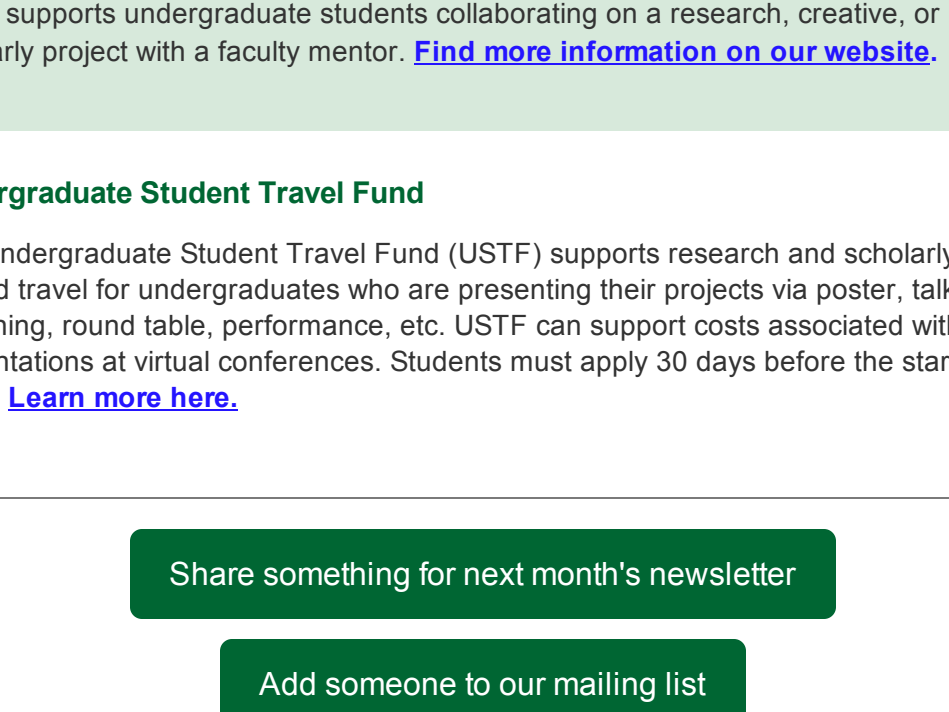
From Our Partners

OSCAR

OSCAR Highlights and Excellence Awards Ceremony and Virtual Spring celebration

May 9-13 | 12:30 - 4:00 | Virtual and CFA

Undergraduate students from all over campus, including OSCAR and several of the colleges, will have videos available for you to watch, describing their work this year. In addition, on Monday May 9, we will have an in-person celebration at CFA including OSCAR student posters and the OSCAR Excellence Awards Ceremony. Please view the presentations and post comments or questions on the videos and come to CFA to talk to students in person about their work. Join us as we celebrate the work of our student scholars. Please visit our website for more information.



Undergraduate Research Scholars Program

Applications for the Fall 2022 Cycle are now open

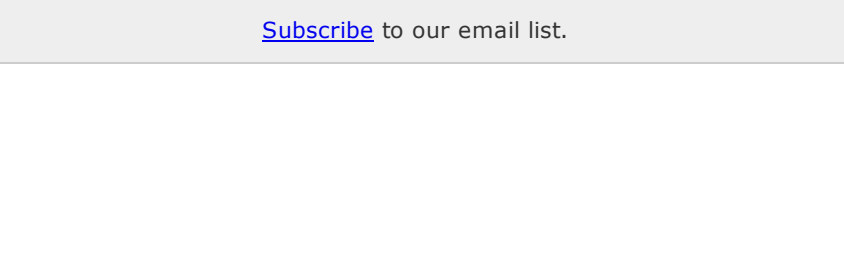
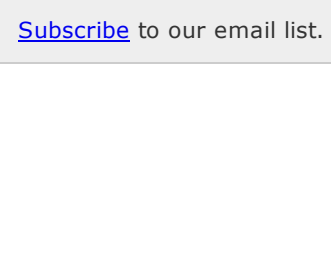
URSP supports undergraduate students collaborating on a research, creative, or scholarly project with a faculty mentor. Find more information on our website.

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, 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.

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