

## From our Directors

Greetings, Friends,

In the midst of all that is going on this month, we wanted to take a moment to share our gratitude for all that you are doing to support teaching and learning at Mason. We know you are continuing to adapt your teaching to meet the needs and expectations of your students; we know how you are shifting your time to make room to manage new technologies and learning environments; and we hear about the ways in which you are supporting your colleagues in their efforts. It was amazing last spring to see you rise to the occasion in the midst of an emergency, but we are deeply grateful for the sustained efforts on your part that have made Fall 2020 at Mason more successful than we could even have imagined, way back in July and August. Thank you!

We're continuing to provide resources to support you this Fall...

- Join our Transparent Assignment Design workshop to help your students perform at their best on your final Fall 2020 projects, or to start thinking about revising assignments for spring
- \* Check out new resources from Writing Across the Curriculum to help you support and grade students' writing assignments this fall
- \* Kick off your winter-break writing project with a boost from one of our Friday Faculty Writing Sprints

...while we're hoping you'll join us in looking ahead toward Spring events and opportunities:

- Nominate a colleague for a 2021 teaching award: Adjunct TEA and Online TEA nominations are due December 1, 2020
- Apply to participate in Course ReDesign Academy, all virtual January 11-12, 2021
- Sign up to join our Virtual Faculty Writing Retreat, January 12-14, 2021

See details below, and watch our Webinars page and newsletter for announcements about upcoming January workshops on teaching in the new Horizon Hall rooms, Fine-tuning your Spring Syllabus Across Modalities, Engaging Students in the First Week, and more.

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 hope you also are finding moments of gratitude this month that can refresh your energies, and that you continue to find ways to connect with people and projects that sustain you.

Shelley & Faisal

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## Faculty Teaching Awards

### Online and Adjunct Teaching Excellence Awards

#### Nomination Deadline for Online and Adjunct TEA: Tuesday, December 1st, 2020

The 2021 George Mason University Online and Adjunct Teaching Excellence Awards are open to faculty with significant teaching experience at George Mason.

- **The Adjunct Teaching Excellence Awards** recognize excellence in the teaching of part-time faculty who have already completed teaching courses in at least six semesters at Mason.
- **The Online Teaching Excellence Awards** recognize teaching excellence in faculty members who have taught at least one fully-online course at Mason. Faculty may be full-time or part-time, and need to have taught online at least four complete semesters at Mason.
- The deadline for TEAs for full-time faculty (term and tenure-line) has passed

Students, faculty members, or administrators may nominate any faculty member for an award (we don't accept self-nominations). See more information [on our website](#).

**To nominate:** Please [use our Qualtrics survey](#) to provide the information about your nominee and a few paragraphs about your recommendation for them.

## Faculty Development Events & Workshops

[Implementing Transparent Assignments](#)

Tuesday, November 17 | 12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. | Zoom

Have you ever given students an assignment and received submissions that were unexpected? Join this workshop to increase the transparency of your assignments! You'll learn how to make your purpose, instructions and evaluation criteria clearer. Assignment transparency can contribute to greater student understanding of the assignment, easier grading and less student anxiety, which are even more important with online modalities. Please use this [registration link](#) to sign up for the Implementing Transparent Assignments Workshop.

Questions? Email Dr. Crystal Anderson, Assistant Director for Teaching Excellence, Stearns Center | [cander8@gmu.edu](mailto:cander8@gmu.edu)

### Course ReDesign Academy is Virtual again in January!

Monday, January 11 and Tuesday January 12, 2021  
Application Deadline: Monday December 7, 2020

Course ReDesign Academy will be online again in January! We'll use a blend of synchronous meetings and workgroups 8:30am-5:00pm on the two key days, plus some asynchronous learning, to support your course project. Use our academy as a just-in-time consultation about teaching in a new modality or with new assignments in your Spring 2021 course—or get a jump on a course you want to build or redesign for Summer or Fall terms.

Course ReDesign Academy provides a stipend to support faculty from all ranks, levels, disciplines, and modalities as they build or revise engaging, relevant, manageable courses. [See our site for deadlines, dates, details, and FAQs.](#)

## Online Teaching Opportunities and Resources

### 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 Fall 2020", "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 during the Fall 2020 semester. 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](#).

## From Our Partners

### University Libraries

#### New Curriculum Resource from the Libraries

The [Libraries' new Curriculum Center](#) is an online repository for the best lesson plans from Mason Libraries' instructors. The site will be updated regularly with new plans, which are available for the entire Mason community to access and use in their classes. Within each lesson plan's page, there is a link to an Office 365 folder which may be accessed with a Mason login. Anyone may submit lesson plans for inclusion in the Curriculum Center. All lesson plans are welcome, including those for undergraduate classes, graduate classes, and workshops and those for face-to-face, virtual, or hybrid instruction. Submissions are accepted on a rolling basis and will be evaluated regularly

throughout the year.

### New library resource guide: Anti-racism, #BlackLivesMatter, and Civic Action

The Libraries has published a new resource guide on [Anti-Racism, #BlackLivesMatter, and Civic Action](#). The purpose of this guide is to provide general information and research resources on anti-Black racism, anti-racist learning and practice, the Black Lives Matter movement, and related activist movements. The guide is being developed by librarians and staff, with input from members of the Mason community. The Libraries offers this guide as a starting point, not an exhaustive set of resources, which we will continue to update with relevant items. We welcome community recommendations via the Suggestions box located within the guide.

### Records Management Updates & Workshops

University Records Management is offering a number of virtual workshops for staff and faculty throughout the fall, including Records Coordinator Training, Building Internal Records Policies and Practices, and quick Retention Review sessions focused on specific records types (such as Academic and Research Records, Human Resources and Fiscal Records, and Administrative and Miscellaneous Records). University Records Management offers these workshops to assist the Mason community, as improper handling of university records can affect audits, accreditation, litigation, and more.

More information about workshop dates and offerings is available [here](#) and updates regarding university regulations are available [here](#).

### New Library Resource for Sciences: JoVE Education Unlimited

JoVE, an innovative library of video collections, is ideal for this academic year's hybrid model of virtual and in-person learning. Instructors can turn to JoVE for high quality, engaging demonstrations and animations of laboratory methods and more in Biology, Chemistry, Clinical Skills, Engineering, Environmental Science, Physics, and Psychology. Concise lessons complement classroom and lab instruction, and detailed accompanying transcriptions facilitate accessibility. JoVE, the first and only peer-reviewed scientific video journal, publishes more than 100 new videos each month. [Read more here](#).

### Virtual DiSC

The [Libraries' Digital Scholarship Center](#) (DiSC) is providing virtual assistance this fall! DiSC staff is available to help you with your digital scholarship needs, including finding, managing, and working with data; GIS and geospatial data; digital humanities methods and tools, and accessing and using software.

While offering virtual consultations and workshops throughout the semester, DiSC is also hosting virtual drop-in hours from Noon - 4 p.m. each weekday. Visit [dsc.gmu.edu](http://dsc.gmu.edu) to access the virtual drop-in link, view DiSC's workshop schedule, and more. Send us an email at [datahelp@gmu.edu](mailto:datahelp@gmu.edu).



## Writing Across the Curriculum

### Register now for the Winter 2021 Faculty Writing Retreat!

January 12-14 | MS Teams

Hoping to start Spring semester with a blast of writing productivity? This three-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 is open now through December 11. For more information and to sign up, [please visit our website](#).

### New Resources for Teaching with Writing

Thinking of new ways to bring writing into your courses? The WAC Program has developed [new resources](#) designed to support faculty who teach with writing. Visit our site to learn more about designing effective assignments, facilitating peer review groups, and providing effective and efficient feedback. If you have questions about teaching with writing, please email the program directly at [wac@gmu.edu](mailto:wac@gmu.edu).

### Faculty Writing Sprints

Fridays 9:00-11:00am | MS Teams

This fall, the [WAC program](#) is hosting weekly writing sprints for faculty who would like to write with a community of peers who will encourage you and help keep you on track! Join us at 9:00 (or whenever you can), set a goal, and marvel at your productivity! All faculty, at all levels, with any kind of writing projects, are invited. If you are interested in joining us, please use the link below to request access to the MS Teams workspace or email us at [wac@gmu.edu](mailto:wac@gmu.edu).

[Click here to access the MS Team's workspace](#)

## OSCAR

### National Conference on Undergraduate Research

[NCUR \(National Conference on Undergraduate Research\)](#) is now accepting undergraduate student research abstracts for their virtual conference in April. Please encourage all students to submit their research abstracts! OSCAR will cover at least a portion of the registration fee for all

GMU students whose work is accepted for presenting. To submit a new abstract, please view the abstract guidelines. If students are resubmitting an abstract that was accepted to NCUR 2020 for automatic acceptance to NCUR 2021, please note that the steps are slightly different.

### 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

Look for information for URSP Summer 2021 in December.

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

## Undergraduate Education

### Summer Team Impact Projects

The Office of the Provost is excited to offer grants for Summer Team Impact Projects for summer 2021. Pending budget approval, the Office of Undergraduate Education, OSCAR, and CECIL will fund several summer projects creating a cohort of undergraduate student, graduate students, and faculty members. These multidisciplinary projects will explore a central theme, a research question, or a community identified problem. All projects will be led by at least two faculty members who will hire six to ten undergraduate students to actively engage with the project throughout the summer.

Proposals are due December 4, 2020. See [masonimpact.gmu.edu](https://masonimpact.gmu.edu) for more information.

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