

## From our Directors

Greetings, Friends,

We've been saying it to each other all week: it was so great to spend time with so many of you during ITL last month – it seems like *ages* since we'd had a chance to hear about what's going on in your courses and catch up about your lives. We hope you got to reconnect with long-time friends and meet some new folks—and it's not too late to send a quick email to someone you met, or to give yourself the gift of watching a five-minute on-demand session to help re-stoke your energy here at mid-semester.

We're trying to help you keep the energy going! In October, you can

- Check out our [ITL On Demand sessions](#) to learn more about flipping a course, communicating with your online students, providing feedback, and more!
- [Nominate a colleague](#) for a teaching award: full-time faculty TEA nominations are due October 12
- Attend a virtual workshop on redesigning assignments to work in new Fall 2020 modalities

See more details below.

We continue to look for ways to support you in your work; keep watching our [Consultations, Trainings, and Webinars](#) page for more ways that you can reach us and use our opportunities to see what other faculty are doing. But we also urge you to be kind to yourself: you are probably already doing quite enough, and we support your decisions to focus your energies on one or two goals that are of utmost importance to you right now.

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 wish you a productive—and sustainable—October.

Shelley & Faisal

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## Faculty Development Events & Workshops

### Teaching Excellence Awards

**Nomination Deadline for full-time TEA: Monday, October 12, 2020**

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

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

- **Our TEAs for full-time faculty** (term and tenure-line) offer recognition for excellent teaching overall, and special recognitions for excellence in teaching General Education (Mason Core) or High Impact Learning. Faculty who have already completed three or more years teaching at Mason are eligible.
- **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.

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.

### Redesigning Assignments in Multiple Modalities

**Tuesday, October 20 | 12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.**

Do you have an assignment or activity that you want to make more engaging for your online course? Join this workshop to redesign a current assignment! You'll learn to align your assignment with your teaching goals, utilize active learning strategies to increase engagement and take advantage of the benefits of your chosen teaching modality for more effective learning. Please use this [registration link](#) to sign up for the Redesigning Assignments Workshop.

## Implementing Transparent Assignments

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

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)

# Online Teaching Opportunities

## 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](#).

# Updates from the Stearns Center

## We are hiring!

The Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning at George Mason University is currently seeking an **Instructional Designer** to work across various programs and disciplines. The Instructional Designer is responsible for working collaboratively with faculty, Subject Matter Experts (SME), and cross-departmental stakeholders in the conceptualization, design, development, and on-time delivery of high-quality courses and learning experiences. The Instructional Designer plays an active role in decisions related to learning design, ensuring that experiences meet the specifications of the degree program and adhering to institutional expectations for rigor, quality, and scalability. Additional duties include working directly with Mason faculty and staff to create professional development opportunities to support effective online teaching and learning. This position reports to the Director for Digital Learning.

[View the posting on the GMU Jobs site](#)

# From Our Partners

## University Libraries

## 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).



### GRADReCon GRADUATE RESEARCH CONNECTIONS

#### GRADReCon 2020

Thursday, October 29 & Friday, October 30, Noon - 4:45 p.m. | Virtual

GRADReCon is an annual offering for Mason graduate students to help build their productivity, research, and writing skills. A smorgasbord of workshops on topics essential to graduate student success at Mason, GRADReCon is a partnership of Graduate Student Life, University Libraries and other key University programs and services for Grad Students. Learn more on [our website](#).

## Writing Across the Curriculum

### 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).

The link to the MS Team's workspace is here:

<https://teams.microsoft.com/l/team/19%3a8a7bddd5a4345e08aa289ecb38d1a68%40thread.tacv2/conversations?groupId=ff0a5d1e-50c7-4d02-9509-4239605eda4b&tenantId=9e857255-df57-4c47-a0c0-0546460380cb>

## OSCAR

### 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

Spring 2021 Application Deadline: October 28, 2020

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

### 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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