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Stearns Center
for Teaching and Learning
Digital Learning | Teaching Excellence

From Our Director

Greetings, Friends,

Welcome to October—or as we call it around here, “Post-ITL”! It was fabulous to reconnect with so many of you at person at the conference, and we were delighted that over a hundred people participated using our first-ever online streaming options. We hope you enjoyed it as much as we did: learning strategies for building inclusive classrooms in all modalities, connecting with your colleagues, and maybe meeting some new friends you can trade ideas with.

We know how important your colleagues are to you, and how much you admire one another’s work. Yet our nominations for our Teaching Excellence Awards this year are lagging, and we don’t want to overlook any of the talented, hard-working faculty who are the heart of Mason’s “access to excellence” promise.

So we’ve **extended the TEA Nomination Deadline to Friday, October 21**. It only takes a few minutes to [use our online form](#) to let us know about a colleague who is doing exceptional work; often, just hearing that someone else thinks they’re excellent is a powerful encouragement to continue their efforts.

Meanwhile, if you didn’t get to attend as many sessions as you’d hoped—or if your plans changed and you weren’t able to join us—there’s still time to use your Fall Break Second Wind to give yourself the gift of a little ITL energy, so you can boost your mood and your teaching creativity here at midsemester:

- **Read for 10 minutes:** Review one of our [On-Demand sessions](#) or the handouts posted from Interactive Sessions. Our On Demand presenters have great advice on everything from designing role plays about ethics to integrating guest lecture videos, and in building effective class teams to discussing race in an online course.
- **Connect for 30 minutes:** This is a great week to send a two-sentence email to a colleague you met or reconnected with, a presenter whose session you attended, or a friend who couldn’t attend but might love to hear something you learned, just to say “thanks” or “do you want to grab [virtual] coffee sometime?” (Hint to my introvert friends: You’re not “bothering them,” you’re offering coffee and a smile, and who doesn’t like that?)
- **Act for 60 minutes:** This is a great idea you heard someone explain? This is a perfect time to try it out with your students, and you don’t have to go it alone. This is our [last call for ITL-in-Action](#), an opportunity to **plant call for ITL-in-Action**, an opportunity to join our “small changes” with peers and feedback from our Stearns Center experts, and earn an ITL-in-Action Blue Ribbon to wear next year.

Of course, there’s still plenty of time in the semester to build on what you learned at ITL through another Stearns Center resource. We’re particularly excited about these events, which you can find out more about below or on our [full Fall Calendar](#) events page:

- **Friday, October 14: NEW!** Attend our first-ever Assignment Clinic: You bring your handout or your notes for that upcoming project, essay, discussion, or
- **Friday, October 14: NEW!** Attend the first in our Anti-Racist and Inclusive Teaching (ARIT) workshop series. [Register here](#) link to the ARIT workshop.
- **Also this month:** Attend an upcoming workshop or webinar on re-engaging students at mid-semester, providing feedback on student projects, or proctoring exams with HonorLock.

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 the small pleasures of clear autumn sunshine, warm sweaters, your favorite snack candies, a breakthrough in your thinking or research, the student whose comment shows that they really, really get it, and/or the option to start thinking about cool things you’ll do next term.

Shelley

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Events & Deadlines

ITL-in-Action

Carry your ITL energy forward! Whether you attended the whole day, or just listened to the keynote or browsed our On Demand resources, you are primed to turn your thinking into action with **small changes to your teaching this semester**. Even small changes are more fun when you connect with peers working on similar goals!

ITL in Action consists of two 75-minute sessions. The first meeting—October 27 or October 28—will provide opportunity for brainstorming about your class activity or assignment, while the second meeting in December will focus on sharing about the implementation of your creation with your peers. Participants will qualify to receive an ITL in Action Ribbon which they may wear to next year’s ITL conference. Additionally, completing this series is a nice addition to your CV or annual report. Register today using [our online form!](#)

TEA Nominations

Full-time TEA Nomination Deadline EXTENDED: Friday, October 21, 2022

Adjunct and Online TEA Nomination Deadline: Friday, December 2, 2022

The 2023 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 for all instructional faculty members (adjuncts, term, tenured and tenure-track) who have taught at least one fully online course during the past academic year, and who also have at least four semesters completed of teaching fully online courses at Mason. Faculty do not need to teach exclusively online, nor do their online courses need to occur in consecutive semesters. We are expanding our OTEAs this year, and will be able to recognize faculty who demonstrate excellence in asynchronous and/or synchronous online teaching, as well as recognizing excellence in the design and implementation of online assessment strategies.

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 Workshops

Webinar

November 10 | Online | 2:30-3:30pm |

Webinar: Proctoring with HonorLock | Facilitator: HonorLock

Learn more about proctoring exams online with HonorLock. Proctored testing software monitors the exam session for potential academic dishonesty and alerts a live proctor to join the student’s session in real-time if it detects any issues. This blend of AI and human review delivers a less intimidating and non-invasive proctored testing experience. When done right, proctored testing creates a more equitable and equitable environment for testing, holding everyone accountable to do their best work. Honorlock can be found in Blackboard and is available to all Mason faculty. Register here.

Continuing Professional Development Workshops for Fall 2022

Do you want to improve your assignments, your grading, or your online discussions this fall, but don’t have time for a lengthy design? Are you completing an evaluation portfolio and want to document your commitment to improving your teaching? Our one-hour, interactive CPD workshops might be just the thing!

The Stearns Center is offering a series of [Continuing Professional Development workshops](#) throughout Fall 2022. These workshops cover topics including efficient grading, engaging students, and providing feedback for written assignments. Please register via links on our [Events](#) page; workshops will be virtual or have a virtual option throughout Fall 2022.

Faculty who complete three CPD workshops and upload a revised course document during one calendar year will receive the Stearns Center Level One Faculty Development Credential.

October 14 | Online | 12:00 – 1:00 pm | CPD Level 1 Engage

Anti-Racism and Inclusive Teaching: An Introduction to Developing More Inclusive Educational Spaces | Facilitator: Rachel Yoho

Are you ready to integrate inclusive teaching throughout your instructional spaces? Would you like to explore techniques and build tangible plans for your classes? This is where that journey begins. In this workshop, we will explore some of the definitions and terms often found in conversations about creating more inclusive classrooms. We will work together to advance our individual abilities in inclusive teaching and learning. At the end of the workshop, we will have developed familiarity with concepts and terminology, explored inclusive classroom activities, and set one or two manageable goals for their classes. [Register here](#)

October 19 | Online | 12:00 – 1:00 pm | CPD Level 1 Engage

Making a Mid-Course Correction to Enhance Engagement | Facilitator: Crystal Anderson

Would you like to increase student attendance and assignment completion? Do you want to leverage technology so that students value in-class activities? Would you like students to think your course is engaging? In this workshop, you will learn strategies that you can apply during the semester to enhance student engagement. [Register here](#)

October 25 | Online | 12:00 – 1:00 pm | WAC + CPD Level 1 Assess

Providing Feedback to Support Student Revision | Facilitator: Tim Lilley

Want to develop a more sustainable plan for providing feedback? This workshop will help faculty increase student engagement with and the impact of their feedback. Participants will first learn more about how students revise before exploring some strategies for providing feedback to support more substantive student learning. The workshop will close by offering faculty some time to implement one of the strategies into their courses. Visit [WAC’s website](#) for more details, or [complete this survey to register](#).

November 1 | Online | 12:00 – 1:00 pm | WAC + CPD Level 1: Design

An Introduction to the New WI Learning Outcomes | Facilitator: Tim Lilley

Wondering what’s happening with the new WI learning outcomes? This workshop will help faculty learn about the new WI outcomes and begin to learn ways to integrate these outcomes into their course designs. Participants will first plan ways to research these outcomes before exploring some strategies for teaching with them. The workshop will close by offering faculty some time to implement one of the strategies into their courses. Visit [WAC’s website](#) for more details, or complete this [survey to register](#).

Assignment Clinic

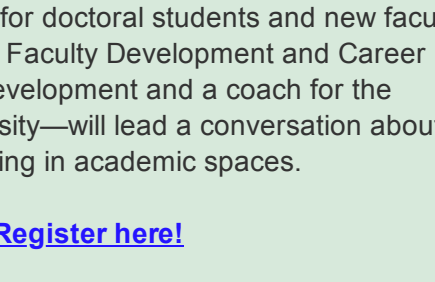
October 14, 2022 | Online | 9:00am – 12:00pm

Facilitators: Crystal Anderson, Breana Bayraktar and Laina Lockett

Do you have an assignment or activity that is not working as you planned? Would you like some feedback to help get your assignment back on track? Sign up for the Assignment Clinic, where Stearns Center staff will help you to think through a possible revision for the assignment and improve the outcomes during this semester. After registering for a time range, you will receive a confirmation for a 10-minute slot with a Stearns Center consultant within that time range. The deadline for signing up is October 12th and spaces are limited so register now!

Other Stearns Center Resources

Subscribe to Fall 2022 Online Teaching Coaching Newsletter: How to Ensure Regular and Substantive Interaction in Your Online Course Design and Teaching?



In the Fall 2022 Online Teaching Coaching Newsletter series, we will focus on tips for quality online course design and teaching practices that support Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) between online instructors and students. RSI complies with Department of Education regulations and provides a hallmark of effective online teaching! Throughout the semester, our newsletter will highlight practices for how you may implement Regular and Substantive Interaction in your online courses. Starting in mid-September, you will receive an Online Teaching Coaching Newsletter issue about every two weeks during the Fall 2022 semester. The newsletter will be available to you as a downloadable PDF, so that you may save and refer to these teaching strategies just when you need them.

[Subscribe today!](#) Past issues of the Online Teaching Newsletter may be downloaded from the [Stearns Center website](#) (see the Online Teaching Newsletters posted on the right of the screen).

Questions? Contact [Darlene Smucny](#), Assistant Director for Quality in Online Instruction, Stearns Center.

Check out Stearns Center 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. Email qateam@gmu.edu to request a copy of the full guidelines. You can indicate whether you would like a brief consultation with our QA team in your email.

Contact QA Team: For any questions regarding Online Quality Assurance, please contact: qateam@gmu.edu

Writing Across the Curriculum

Writing-intensive Course Learning Outcomes Implementation

Beginning in fall 2023, the WAC Committee will begin reviewing WI courses to provide feedback to faculty and units on the integration of the new WI learning outcomes and WI course criteria. Visit [WAC’s Outcomes Implementation Process webpage](#) to learn more about this process and the resources we are developing to support faculty and units.

Faculty Writing Community

Our Friday Writing Projects are in full swing this semester, and all faculty with any kind of writing project are invited to participate. After a few minutes of check-ins and goal-setting, we will spend our time quietly working together. Add them to your calendar, and we will prepare to meet at just how much you can accomplish in two-hours bursts alongside your fellow Mason writers. Visit [WAC’s Faculty Writing Community webpage](#) to learn more and to register.

Stearns Center News

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

Libraries

Social Justice in Open Education

October 14, 2022 | In-person | 10:15 - 11:15am

Social Justice in Open Education: One Size Does Not Fit All Room 4010/4th Floor, Fenwick Library, Fairfax, GMU

Event link: <https://gmu.libcal.com/event/9679278>

The Libraries invite the GMU community to One Size Does Not Fit All, in advance of Open Access Week. The livestreamed presentation features Professor Jasmine Roberts-Crews, a renowned leader in open education, who will address the topics of inclusion and social justice, from 10:15-11:15 am. She teaches for the School of Communication at Ohio State University, and published the openly-licensed book *Writing for Geographic Information Industries*.

Starting at 11:15 am, Emilie Algenio, Open Educational Resources and Scholarly Communications Librarian, will lead a discussion, and field questions about open education. We hope you’ll come to Fenwick Library, to watch Professor Roberts-Crews’ livestreamed presentation together, and then stay for the face-to-face conversation to follow!

This event is free, no RSVP is needed, and it will not be recorded.

If you require an accommodation, please let Emilie Algenio know (algenio@gmu.edu), so that we may put you in touch with GMU’s Disability Services for assistance.

Supporting Quantitative Learning in the Social Sciences: New Report Details Challenges and Opportunities

Ithaka S+R released findings from one of the largest in-depth studies of teaching practices across social science disciplines, conducted in partnership with librarians from 20 colleges and universities in the United States. Four faculty librarians from George Mason University Libraries led the study at Mason. Mason’s results are available in this report: <http://hdl.handle.net/1920/12109>.

Read more about the study and the final, national report here: <https://sr.ithaka.org/blog/supporting-quantitative-learning-in-the-social-sciences/>.

Feel free to contact Wendy Mann (wmann@gmu.edu), Director, Digital Scholarship Center with any questions.

Faculty Affairs

Opportunity to Join an Affinity Group

As part of Mason’s commitment to inclusive excellence, the Office of Faculty Affairs and Development supports faculty and doctoral students’ affinity groups. These groups provide our diverse faculty and doctoral students with a sense of community, inclusion and belonging. The groups also serve as safe spaces for discussion of issues that impact the success and well-being of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Multiracial, Asian, Asian American, Pacific Islanders and First-Generation faculty members and historically underserved doctoral students. [Learn more about Affinity Groups here](#).

AAPI—Asian, Asian American, Pacific Islander Faculty

In person, Wednesday, October 12, from noon-1:00pm, Johnson Center, room B

BLIM—Black, Latinx, Indigenous, Non-racial Faculty

Online Only, Friday, November 11, from noon-1:00pm | [Register here!](#)

HUDDS—Historically Underserved Doctoral Students

Connecting and thriving in the academy: Learning how to develop a network of peer academics from your discipline is an important skill for doctoral students and new faculty. In this conversation, Dr. Aurora Chang—Director of Faculty Development and Career Advancement in the Office of Faculty Affairs and Development and a coach for the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity—will lead a conversation about the importance of relationship building and networking in academic spaces.

Online Only, Monday, October 17, 2:45pm – 4pm | [Register here!](#)

Faculty Matters

How to Write Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work Statements

Please encourage your faculty to join us November 1 from 1-2:30pm if they want to know more about how to effectively convey the impact of their research, scholarly, and creative work. Registration is required, please see the [website](#) for details.

OSCAR

Undergraduate Research Scholars Program

URSP supports undergraduate students collaborating on a research, creative, or scholarly project with a faculty mentor. Deadline is October 19. [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 (STIP) for Summer 2023. The Offices of Undergraduate Education, OSCAR, and CECIL will fund multidisciplinary summer projects of undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty members. These projects will explore a central theme, a research question, or a community identified problem. Proposals focusing on the UN Global Goals or Anti-Racist Community Engagement are encouraged. The deadline for proposals is November 18, 2022. For more information, please go to <https://go.gmu.edu/stip>.

LEAD A SUMMER TEAM IMPACT PROJECT

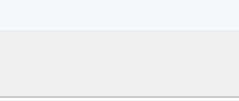
Proposals are due
November 18, 2022

go.gmu.edu/STIP

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