

## From our Directors

Greetings, Friends,

Even though we're not seeing you in person in our Innovation Hall digs or in some random Starbucks line, we can still feel all the good vibes and energy generated by your teaching, in *whatever* modalities you're using right now. Mason students signed up for courses in record numbers this year in large part because **they trust faculty like you** to help keep their learning moving forward, especially in extraordinary circumstances. And your Stearns Center team knows just how hard you're working this fall to make connections, provoke insights, answer questions, and guide students toward better understanding and application of key concepts in your field.

That said, we'd sure like to **see** you in real time soon—and so we hope that you'll [register for the Innovations in Teaching and Learning Conference](#) (registration is *free* this year!), look at the [program schedule](#) to select some sessions to Zoom into, September 21-25 (see more information below), and maybe reach out to **invite a friend** to attend with you (maybe someone who's new to your department, or even just new to ITL). We're excited about how moving to an online setting can open this conference up to people who might never have attended, and it seems you are, too; we're already ahead of last year's registration numbers at this time!

But wait, there's more! Also coming up, you can

- Nominate a colleague for a teaching award
- [Register](#) and join our next webinar on **Engaging Online Learners: Tips and Strategies**
- [Subscribe](#) to our **Online Teaching Coaching Newsletter** to receive tips, guidance and resources concerning a specific online teaching topic
- Join a community of faculty writers to stay motivated and accountable on your research

See more details below.

We're working on expanding our virtual resources to help you face new teaching challenges, connect with your peers, and extend your understanding of effective strategies for teaching. Keep an eye on 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.

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 that you are settling into the new rhythms of Fall 2020, with time for both familiar endeavors and new explorations.

Shelley & Faisal

E Shelley Reid, Ph.D.  
Director for Teaching Excellence  
Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning  
Associate Professor, English Department  
[ereid1@gmu.edu](mailto:ereid1@gmu.edu)

Faisal Mahmud, Ph.D.  
Director for Digital Learning  
Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning  
[fmahmud5@gmu.edu](mailto:fmahmud5@gmu.edu)

## Faculty Development Events & Workshops

**INNOVATIONS**  **in Teaching  
& Learning** conference

Save the Date! Innovations in Teaching & Learning conference

September 21-25

Join us for the **Innovations in Teaching & Learning (ITL) conference**, the Stearns Center for

Teaching and Learning's signature annual event, that brings together Mason's instructors from across disciplines to share their strategies for teaching through lively virtual interactive workshops and panels. From the comfort of your home, brew a cup of coffee and enjoy over 30+ Synchronous and 30+ On Demand sessions September 21-25. You will walk away with something to use in your class the next day, week or semester.

Keynote speaker Bryan Alexander author of [Academia Next: The Future of Higher Education](#) (click link for FREE Mason access to his *e-book* thanks to sponsorship of University Libraries), will invite us to reflect on how the landscape of higher education is changing and how technology can transform education, improving student experience and learning outcomes.

Whether you're full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, graduate student, or support office staff, we hope that you can join us for an inspiring week filled with conversation, fellowship, and fun! [Register](#) and find out more at <https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/itl>

Please watch a [welcome video](#) from Stearns Center Co-Director Dr. Shelley Reid!

Check out these latest additions to the program schedule:

- Welcoming remarks from President Washington at the start of the keynote session at 10am on Friday, September 25<sup>th</sup>
- Welcoming remarks from Interim Provost Ginsberg at the start of the "From COVID to Change: Pandemic Pedagogy and Small Changes Going Forward" session at 1 pm on Friday, September 25<sup>th</sup>
- Social Lunches hosted by Associate Provosts Kim Eby, Bethany Usher, Laurence Bray, and others 12:15-12:45pm September 21-25 (see schedule for host days)
- Special session for GTAs on engaging students and giving feedback 1-2:30pm on Friday, September 25<sup>th</sup>

### 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 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.

### New Guidelines for Evaluation of Teaching

In collaboration with Faculty Affairs, we have created a new page called [Supporting Efforts to Document and Assess Teaching and Learning](#). As evaluation policies at Mason evolve to include a multi-factor or portfolio-based approach to evaluating teaching, we hope that these resources can help faculty identify ways to document the work and achievements of their teaching, and help departments and evaluators review the work of their colleagues.

## Online Teaching Opportunities

### Stearns Center Continues Courses to Help Faculty Prep for Spring Courses

The Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning will continue to offer sections of the **Online Course Development Primer (OCDP)** and **Pivotal Pedagogy Fundamentals (PPF) course** for faculty preparing to teach courses in the spring term. Since Spring 2020, the center has worked with over 600 faculty to support the conceptualization, design, and development of hybrid and online courses. We welcome all Mason faculty to use our registration form to [sign up for our fall program dates](#) by Friday, September 11; faculty will be matched wherever possible with others from related fields, and will work with Stearns Center staff and faculty co-leaders in each course. These seven-week programs will begin on Wednesday, September 30 and conclude on Tuesday, November 19. On average, the OCDP requires about 5-10 hours of work per week, and the PPF about 4-5 hours. More information on the sessions can be found here: [Primer Overviews](#).

**Self-paced versions** of these course design support programs are available. Visit our website at <https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/programs/trainings/> to learn more about using our self-paced courses to improve your course design skills!

### Subscribe to our Online Teaching Coaching Newsletter

If you are teaching an asynchronous course this fall, please read our [Welcome Letter](#). 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 Coaching 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 Coaching Newsletter, you will receive a newsletter issue about every 2 weeks during Fall 2020 semester. 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](#).

## Zoomtopia Event

October 14 – 15

Faculty can register for [Zoomtopia 2020](#), an event for Zoom users by Zoom, for free. Attendees can expect to obtain a better understanding and navigate the world's new normal with safe and secure unified communications; experience firsthand how cloud communications can enhance productivity; and increased familiarity with Zoom product offerings.

# From Our Partners

## Writing Across the Curriculum

### Fall Faculty Writers Community

Are you planning to be writing this semester—articles, book chapters, grant proposals, creative projects, new course lectures, letters to your elected officials? We know that while it's often difficult to make time to focus on your writing, faculty may face even more obstacles this semester, and we want to help!

[Writing Across the Curriculum](#), in collaboration with Faculty Affairs and Stearns Center—the team that brings you Friday Faculty Write-Ins and our Faculty Writing Retreats—will be sponsoring the Faculty Writers Community. Beginning this fall, you can sign up to share weekly writing goals and know that you have peers to encourage you, intrigue you, and keep you on track! All faculty, at all levels, with any kind of writing projects, are invited. You can join the Community for a few weeks or for the entire semester to connect with other faculty writers on campus and to set the tone for a productive academic year. If you're interested in participating, please [fill out our quick survey](#) and we'll be sure to include you to in our mailing list.

## College of Science/Volgenau School of Engineering

### Active Learning in STEM

Friday, October 2, 11:30 am – 12:30 pm

Studies across the STEM disciplines have shown that active learning improves student engagement, retention, and understanding, with the largest impact on women and previously low-achieving students. Supported by a National Science Foundation grant to improve undergraduate STEM education at Mason, we seek to engage the broader STEM community at Mason in working towards this goal, with a particular emphasis on re-examining teaching practices in the context of distance learning. The kickoff discussion will be held on Friday, October 2, with subsequent discussions held the first and third Friday of each month.

Zoom link:

<https://gmu.zoom.us/j/93504031691pwd=VWJhcWF0dmhkL1dmM3ZyUUx5UkNkQT09>

Questions? Contact us!

[Jill Nelson](#), VSE

[Jessica Rosenberg](#), COS

## 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

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.](#)

Share something for next month's newsletter

Add someone to our mailing list